PLANTING IDEAS • BEAUTIFUL GARDENS • EXPERT ADVICE

GARDENS ILLUSTRATED

DECEMBER 2012

PLAN YOUR DREAM GARDEN

10 essential ideas

THE BEST OF WINTER

Add sparkle with silver leaved plants

Festive decorations from your garden

Winter walks for gardeners

BETH CHATTO'S FAVOURITE GARDENING BOOKS

Gertrude Jekyll

How she defined the British garden

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1st PRIZE
WILTSHIRE COUNTRY VEGETABLE COMPETITION
SHOULD'VE GONE TO
Specsavers

editor's letter

Winter is the best time to take stock of the year's gardening successes and failures and devise ways in which to make next year even more rewarding. But how many of us really take a long hard look and plan how we can realistically achieve our 'dream garden'? We ask leading designer Jinny Blom to share her thoughts on ten keys ways to make a difference; turn to page 70 and start plotting. Each season has its own rewards, and growing plants that look their best in winter is a good way to draw us out into the garden whatever the weather. I know that bringing a simple sprig of *Daphne* or winter honeysuckle into the house lifts my spirits no end. Dan Pearson discusses the best shrubs for winter in the final part of his series, while Kristy Ramage gives a step-by-step guide to using nature's bounty for indoor decorations. Visiting gardens and parks is also a great way of finding inspiration and this year I've compiled a list of my favourite winter walks. Beth Chatto is one of the greatest gardeners of our times and I am thrilled that she agreed to write about her favourite gardening books for us. I hope this issue provides you with inspiration and information to help you garden even better next year. Wishing you a very happy Christmas from myself and the GARDENS ILLUSTRATED team.

Juliet

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You can get the latest editions of GARDENS ILLUSTRATED as a digital version to view on your iPad. Available via the App Store.

Enjoy one of the best winter walks for gardeners, see page 40.

This Christmas, make your own decorations from the garden, on page 46.

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

FERGUS GARRETT
Plantsman and head gardener at Great Dixter in East Sussex.

CAROL KLEIN
Plantswoman and presenter of BBC *Gardeners' World*.

ROY LANCASTER
Plantsman, planthunter, writer, lecturer and broadcaster.

ALYS FOWLER
Kew-trained gardener, author and television presenter.

DAN PEARSON
Garden designer, plantsman and columnist.

RICK HARRISON, JASON INGRAM

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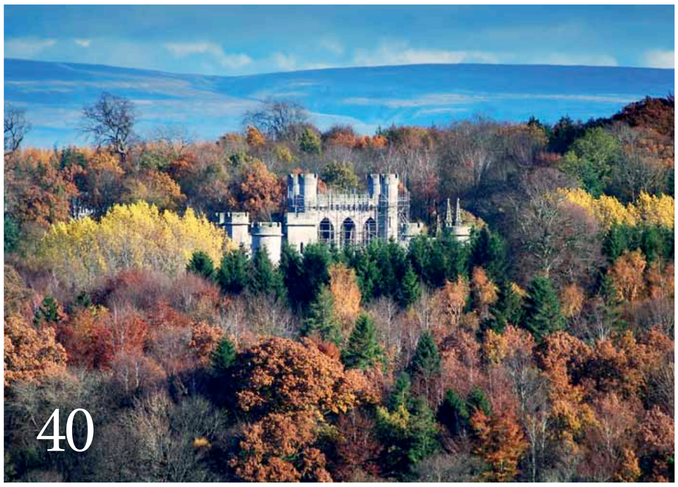

COVER IMAGE

Gertrude Jekyll's garden at Munstead Wood Photograph by Gertrude Jekyll / Country Life picture library.
See feature on page 50

on the cover

PLAN YOUR DREAM GARDEN Designer Jinny Blom suggests her ten top tips on how to give your garden added appeal – see page **70**
THE BEST OF WINTER Ideas for an inspirational winter on pages **40**, **56**, and **66**
GERTRUDE JEKYLL Celebrating the life of Britain's gardening doyenne on page **50**
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- Choose a fabulous free gift and save 30 per cent when you subscribe to GARDENS ILLUSTRATED* – see page 32

* Offer applies to UK customers only.

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GARDENS ILLUSTRATED, Subscriptions, Dovetail Services,
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USA/CANADA GARDENS ILLUSTRATED, PO Box 669, Selmer,
TN 38375 USA. Email: gardens@magcs.com

ADVERTISING ENQUIRIES

☎ | +44 (0)117 933 8072 | lucy.moakes@immediate.co.uk

EDITORIAL ENQUIRIES

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MAGAZINE CONTACTS

EDITORIAL	
Editor	Juliet Roberts
Contributing editors	Alys Fowler, Fergus Garrett, Carol Klein, Roy Lancaster & Dan Pearson
Art editor	David Grenham
Deputy editor	Sorrel Everton
Deputy art editor	Niki Goss
Production editor	Mark Blackmore
Design freelance cover	Jenny Price, Steve Sayers
Botanical adviser	Dr James Compton
ADVERTISING	
Advertisement director	Caroline Herbert
Senior brand sales executive	Lucy Moakes **0117 933 8072** lucy.moakes@immediate.co.uk
Classified sales executive	Luke Newland **0117 314 8391** luke.newland@immediate.co.uk
USA advertising representative	Kate Buckley buckley@buckleypell.com
Advertising designer	Nathaniel Brain
INSERTS	
Laurence Robertson	**+353 876 902208**
CIRCULATION, MARKETING, PRESS & PR	
Newstrade manager	Rob Brock
Acting marketing manager	Julie Sewell
Acting marketing co-ordinator	Mark Summerton
Press officer	Carolyn Wray **0117 314 8300**
MANAGEMENT	
Chairman	Stephen Alexander
Chief executive officer	Tom Bureau
Managing director, Bristol	Andy Marshall
Publisher	Jemima Ransome
SYNDICATION AND LICENSING	
Head of licensing & syndication	Joanna Marshall
PRODUCTION	
Production director	Sarah Powell
Production co-ordinator	Emily Mounter

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contributors

BETH CHATTO

Beth Chatto is a gardener, plantswoman and writer. Her informal gardens, and large nursery produce a wide range of unusual plants, attracting thousands of visitors each year. Her favourite gardening books are presented from page 91.

"Reading the words of dedicated gardeners past and present is as heartwarming as meeting them in person."

GEORGINA LUCK

Georgina is a freelance illustrator living and working in Brighton. She works in traditional mediums, painting in acrylic ink and watercolour, to produce some startlingly beautiful results. You can see her work in Gardener's Notes on page 23.

"I have loved working with Lia Lendeertz on Gardener's Notes, although some months have been trickier than others!"

KRISTY RAMAGE

Moving to an ancient house in rural Wales has inspired a love of the countryside and history, which comes into all Kristy's design work, both on her own and alongside Arne Maynard. She makes Christmas decorations from the garden on page 46.

"Hunting for treasures in the winter garden to decorate the house feels like an essential part of Christmas."

JASON INGRAM

AMY GRENHAM

Based in Bristol, Amy combines her love of beautiful gardens and beautiful things as a freelance stylist for our Shop Front series. Her Christmas guide to the most gorgeous gifts for green-fingered folk appears on page 26.

"Shop Front is not just about products, it's also about locations, and finding that perfect combination is the challenge."

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letters

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Star letter

Slugging match

No doubt Matthew Oates' article [Talking Point, issue 191, page 8] on slugs has rung a familiar bell with many of your readers as it has indeed with me. This year started in earnest with a fresh border dug and generously stocked. I was concerned for my investment and so thought it prudent to provide some form of slug control and opted for a combination of nematodes and traps.

Immediately on applying the nematode treatment we experienced an incredibly dry spring that very likely didn't please the nematodes too much. Within a matter of weeks the plants were showing serious signs of slug attack. The slug traps proved ineffective. I picked up a barrier gel, which was a complete waste of time – it just made the rapidly growing areas of bare soil look as if giant slugs had gone on an expedition around the border!

My wife provided by far the most effective deterrent – waste coffee grinds sourced from a well known coffee shop. The slugs hated it. Unfortunately not enough product could be secured to carry me through the entire summer. So every dusk I donned a head torch, bucket in hand, and put up with the looks from my wife. "What must the neighbours think… the shame of it!"

Darren Stevens, North London

GARDENER'S OBSERVATION

Great expectations

I was interested to read John Brookes' comment that 'the English expect a May-June garden' [issue 189, page 56]. From my experience working as a gardener most people ask for an extended season, often specifically requesting planting that will run through to late autumn and provide winter structure. With a changing climate and an increasing range of plants I would suggest that English expectations are changing.

Jason Craft, East Sussex.

SEED TO SOW

Successful search

I have been searching for months for *Ammi majus* plants. The nearest were 170 miles away. No plant centre or nursery in Surrey had even heard of them. Even Wisley Gardens could not help. I was desperate.

This morning I sorted my slush pile of papers and out fell a packet of seeds – yes! *Ammi majus*. The telltale sticky back means they came with GARDENS ILLUSTRATED. I am so excited, I can't wait to plant them. Thank you so much.

Sally L Thompson, Walton-On-Thames

READER IDEA

Grave concerns

When I visit the graves of my loved ones flowers can be very expensive, lasting but a few days before wilting and fading. Instead I buy potted chrysanthemums, take them to the grave, cut the stalks and place the flowering stems into the vase. These flowers seem to last a very long time, and I bring the remains of the plants home and plant them in my garden. A year on, when they grow to full size and flower, it reminds me of my visits to the cemetery and of the dearly departed. Memories year after year – and value for money.

John Ubsdell by email

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TALKING POINT

Ann-Marie Powell asks if we should be using artificial turf

Ann-Marie Powell is a designer and the author of *Plans for Small Gardens* (Pavilion, 2012)

For many, the perpetual downpours this year rendered our lawns impassable bogs. Gardeners brave enough to risk a quick jaunt returned indoors slick with mud. Throw in the difficulties of lawns in shade, the weekly mow, the hard work of scarifying, aerating and reseeding, the concerns about lawnmowers, feeds and weed killers and it's easy to see why many of us are happy to fake it.

These days artificial lawns are convincing, porous, maintenance free and often manufactured from recycled materials. They are ideal in areas of heavy use, perfect for roof gardens, and even for parking the car. They are not even expensive to install.

But what's the real cost? Lawns are valuable to wildlife and they are part of our gardening heritage. Imagine losing the smell of cut grass, daisy chains, and the hum of a lawnmower on the first day of spring. I'll keep fighting for my little sward of green.

Is artificial turf the way to go?

- What's your view? Write to us by post or email (details above).

We reserve the right to edit letters.

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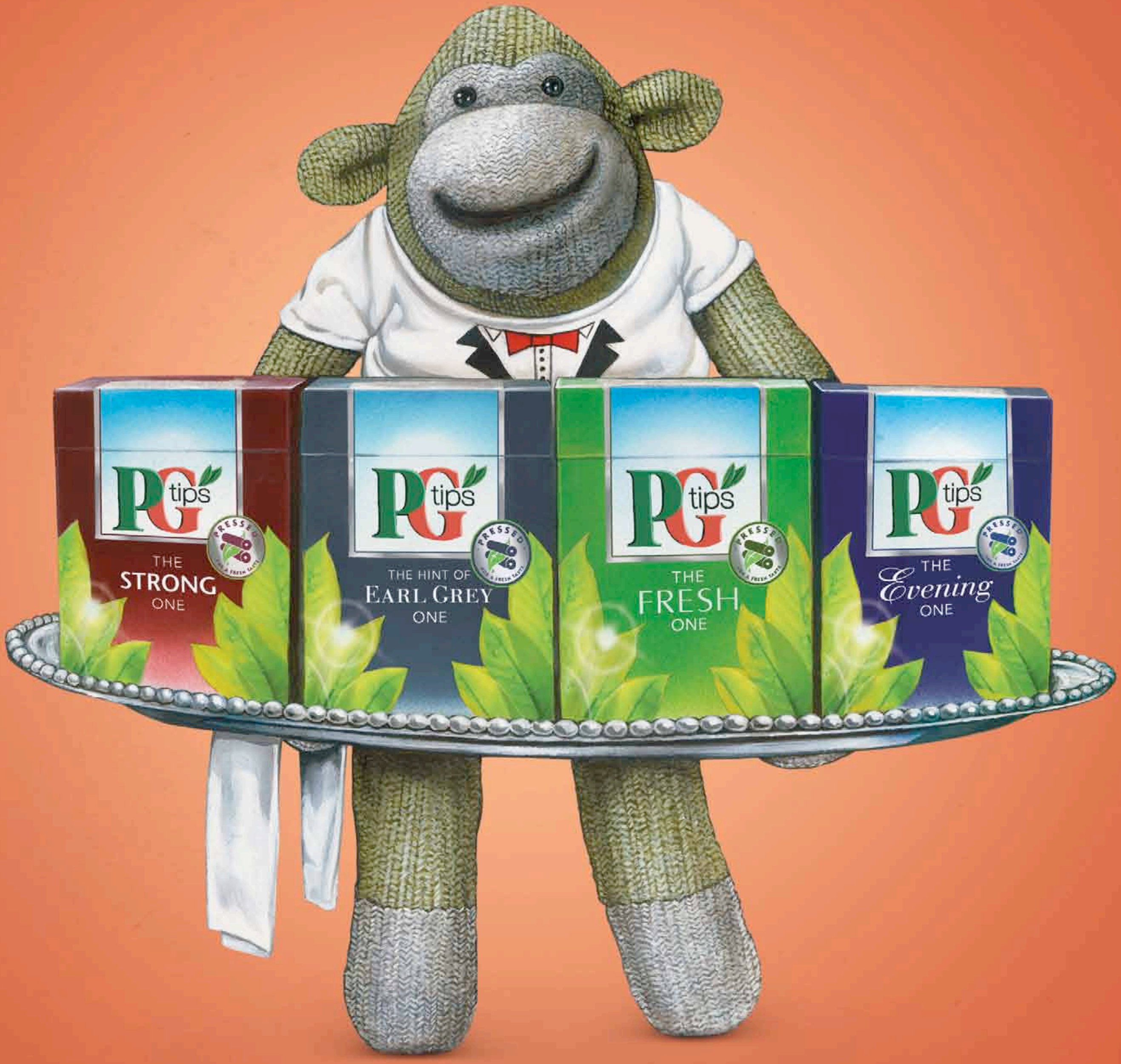
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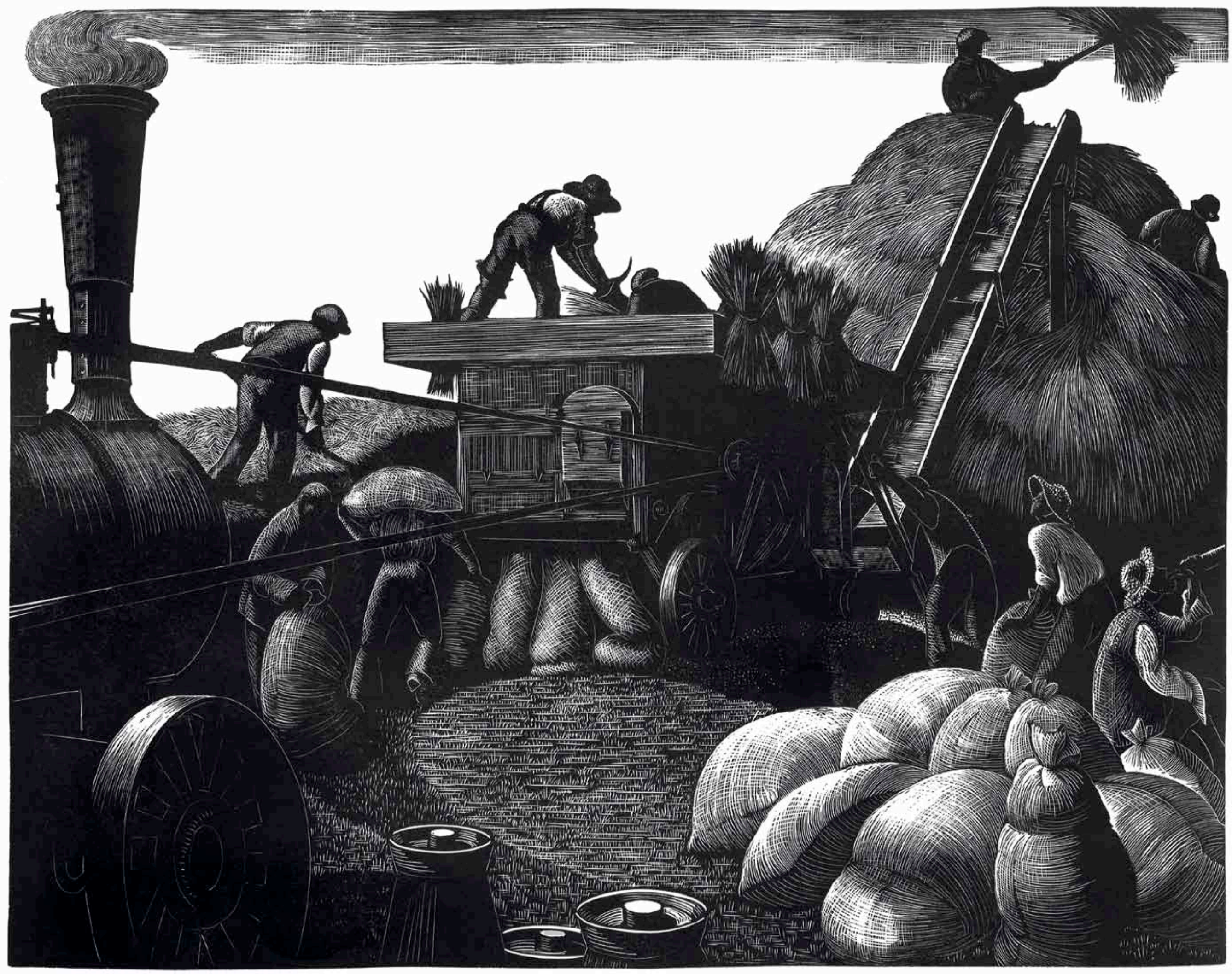
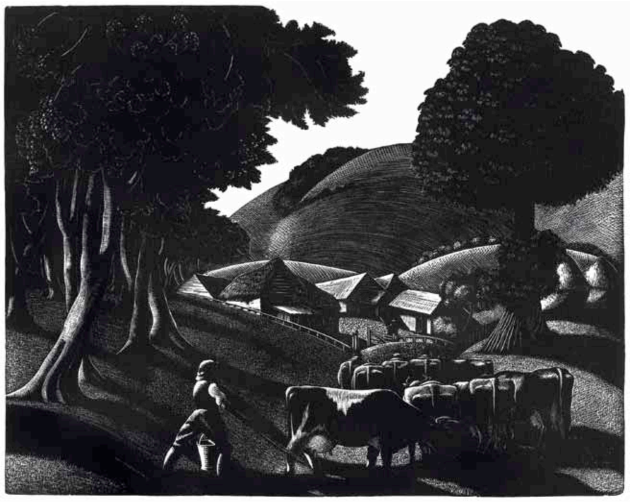


NEW EDITION

A moment in time

The much-admired *The Farmer's Year* by celebrated 20th-century engraver Clare Leighton (1898-1989) has been republished, following its original publication in 1933. Leighton took her inspiration from the countryside around her, and this book features scenes from 1930s Britain at a time when traditional rural life and farming methods were changing rapidly. The 12 engravings capture the working year, from ploughing through to harvest, and trips to market. Accompanied by words from Leighton herself, each scene is brought vividly to life.

- *The Farmer's Year* by Clare Leighton, Little Toller Books, £20; ISBN 978-1908213112. For more details see www.littletoller.co.uk or call 01300 321536.



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Charlie Dimmock gives talks on board

As part of Fred. Olsen's award-winning *Vistas* cruise enhancement programme, TV expert Charlie Dimmock will join this special *Braemar* sailing. This is a fantastic opportunity for like-minded guests and gardening enthusiasts to enjoy talks and professional advice from Charlie. We'll offer optional shore excursions to some of the most beautiful gardens in the region and of course the usual entertainment programme will continue for non-gardening travelling companions.

Braemar is ideal as your home-from-home. Small enough to provide the warmer, more sociable atmosphere for which Fred. Olsen is renowned while still giving plenty of space for guests to enjoy. The ship's pools and cascading decks at the stern are ideal for relaxing in the Canaries sun too.

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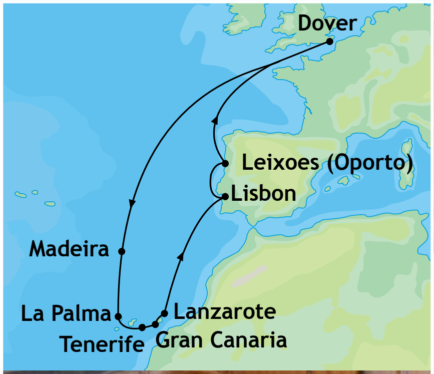

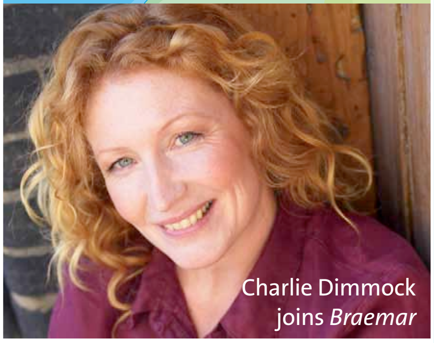

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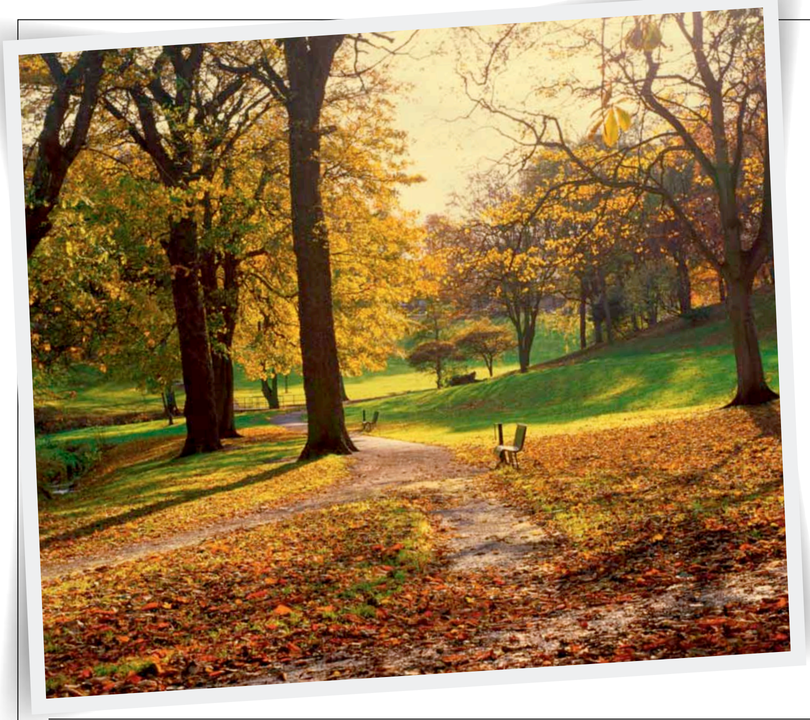

TREE THREAT

Save our ash trees

Nursery and woodland owners have been forced to destroy more than 100,000 ash trees (mostly saplings) in an attempt to check the spread of the destructive fungus *Chalara fraxinea*. As widely reported, the import of ash trees from infected areas have been banned but concern peaked when the first cases of the disease were confirmed on mature woodland trees in the South East. An official ongoing course of action is being determined. In the meantime the Forestry Commission is calling on us all to look out for signs of the disease and report any suspected cases. Although more difficult to spot given autumn leaf fall, symptoms to look out for include leaf loss, crown dieback and stem lesions. An app has been produced to help spot and report the disease at www.ashtag.org. Alternatively there is an identification guide at www.forestry.gov.uk/chalara. Tel 01420 23000.

GET INVOLVED

Plant enthusiasts wanted

The Royal Horticultural Society is calling on plant enthusiasts to share their knowledge and expertise as volunteers on their trial assessment forums for 2013. These are part of the trials run every year to assess garden-worthy plants. The best plant performers are then given an Award of Garden Merit. New trials include assessments of *Digitalis*, *Allium*, *Lachenalia*, *Solenostemon*, *Sarrecenia* and *Streptocarpus*. Those interested in volunteering (who must be RHS members) should email trails@rhs.org.uk

EVENTS

Buy your show tickets now

Tickets for all of the Royal Horticultural Society's garden shows for 2013 are now on sale. The year gets into gear with the Cardiff Show (19-21 April) and continues with Malvern Spring Gardening (9-12 May), Chelsea (21-25 May), Gardeners' World Live (12-16 June), Hampton Court Palace (9-14 July), Tatton (24-28 July) and all the London shows (see above). There are 14 shows to choose from, each with its own atmosphere and horticultural focus. Chelsea Flower Show celebrates it centenary so book your tickets well in advance as demand will be high. Details on www.rhs.org.uk or call 0844 338 7546, or +44 121 767 4063 from outside the UK.

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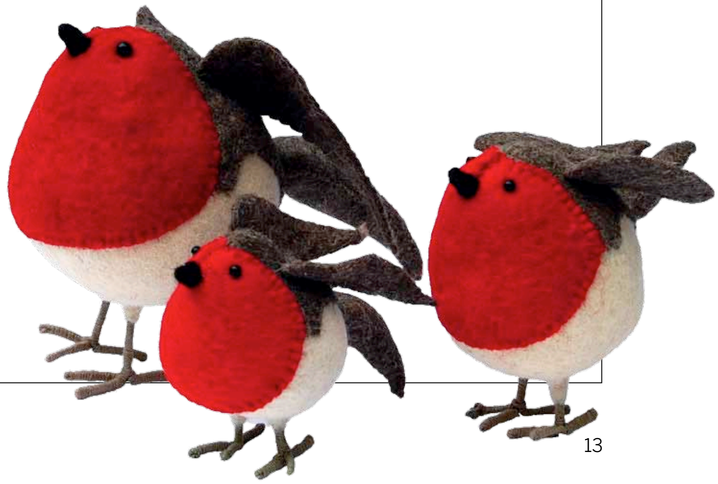

ASH TREES IMAGE: LESLIE GARLAND PICTURE LIBRARY / ALAMY.

NOSEY PARKER

Quizzing interesting people in the world of gardens

Paolo Arrigo

Founder of Seeds of Italy, which focuses on the Italian 'seed to plate' philosophy of growing the tastiest of vegetables for the tastiest of meals.

Where does your passion for growing come from? I've been brought up the Italian way – in the garden, in the kitchen and at the table, so while I've no formal horticultural qualifications, I have that Italian gift of passion.

Who has inspired your career the most? My family have always been involved in food and seeds are food. My father owned a deli and my **grandmother** worked at The Hyde Park Hotel. But the biggest inspiration to me is 'mamma' who of course to every single Italian is the best cook in the world.

What sort of garden do you have yourself? I have a typical suburban London garden but my rule is 'if you can't eat it, don't grow it'. At the moment I'm harvesting Italian alpine escarole lettuces, cavolo nero kale, radicchio from Treviso and there is not a month that I don't sow something, perhaps with the exception of December.

What are the highlights for the 2013 Seeds of Italy catalogue? This year's recipe section is 'Recipes made using protected designation of origin (PDO) and protected geographical indication (PGI) ingredients'. Even such everyday items such as the **Cornish Pasty** PGI or West Country Cheddar PDO are protected in the same way as Parma Ham, Feta cheese or Arbroath Smokies, and our aim is to educate and inspire everyone in the UK to really celebrate these amazing traditional British artisan foods.

Anything we can plant now? Only really garlic at this stage. But now is the time to plan for next year. Even by February you can plant tomatoes, chillies, broad beans, garlic, sugarsnaps, peas, aubergines, peppers, cucumbers. It's really the Mediterranean veg you want to get started off earlier to give them a head start later on.

Not a lot of people know this about me... I'd love to spend a week on an isolated lighthouse in the middle of the ocean. Not contactable, no internet, no mobile phone connection, no TV, nothing to do except read and write and cook, which I never have much time to do. Bliss!

The Seeds of Italy (including Franchi Seeds) 2013 range is now available. Paolo is hosting 'The Italian Christmas' masterclass at Seeds of Italy. Buy seeds and get growing and recipe advice. Signed copies of Paolo's cookery books also available. 21-22 December, 9.30am-6pm. For details go to www.seedsofitaly.com or call 020 8427 5020.

AWARD

Community spirit

Celebrating the power of gardening to change lives for the better, this year's Gardening Against the Odds winner is Sajeda Kadir. Sajeda came to London from Bangladesh as a teenager. She has elderly parents and is mother of two children with muscular dystrophy, yet she is the driving force behind a community edible garden. More details of the awards are at www.telegraph.co.uk/gardening

Sajeda Kadir (right) transformed a disused playground in north London into a shared edible garden.

Diary

- **Chelsea Physic Garden Christmas Fair** Garden sundries, crafts and other gifts to buy plus seasonal foods from the popular Tangerine Dream Café. There's also the chance to view London's oldest Botanic Garden in winter. 1-2 December, 10am-4pm, £5. Chelsea Physic Garden, 66 Royal Hospital Road, Chelsea, London SW3 4HS. Tel 020 7352 5646, www.chelseaphysicgarden.co.uk

- **Heligan walks with head gardener** Stroll around Heligan's sub-tropical valley garden with head gardener Mike Friend. 18 December, 2-3pm. Or join Mike for an informative walk around Heligan's Victorian Productive and Pleasure Gardens. 20 December, 2-3pm. Tickets for each tour cost £1.50 plus garden admission charge, numbers limited. The Lost Gardens of Heligan, St Austell, Cornwall PL26 6EN. Tel 01726 845100, www.heligan.com

- **Festive Sundays at Wakehurst** Savour the gardens and arboretum at their festive wintery best. Sundays, 2, 9 and 16 December, from 10am, normal admission prices apply. Wakehurst Place, Ardingly, nr Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH17 6TN. Tel 01444 894066, www.kew.org

- **Green Willow Christmas at The Garden Station** Make stars, garlands and Christmas decorations using willow, silver birch, pine cones and greenery. 5 December, 11am-4.45pm. £50 plus £7 for materials. Booking essential. The Garden Station, Langley, Hexham, Northumberland NE47 5LA. Tel 01434 684391, www.thegardenstation.co.uk

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Portugal

Spring Gardens around Lisbon and the Sintra Hills

17 – 24 March 2013

Formal gardens of Lisbon combine with those in the Sintra hills. Judas trees in blossom herald spring in the lush microclimate. Azulejos tiles, parterres, statues complement the vistas.

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ILLUSTRATED

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Ring O'Roses

in association with Boxwood Tours

Join us on a series of long weekend breaks to visit a hand-picked selection of the finest gardens and nurseries in rural areas, easily accessible from London and each centred on a hotel with excellent food and accommodation.

These exciting weekend garden breaks offer the chance of personal introductions and tours by owners and gardeners to inspiring gardens, many privately owned and not easily accessible to individuals. There will be expert help on hand to answer your queries about designs, plants, gardens and gardening, all in the company of like-minded GARDENS ILLUSTRATED readers. You'll eat well and sleep comfortably in a selection of good hotels, while also enjoying invitations to garden lunches as we tour the region.

Each break has a similar pattern, starting with a lunch together on the Friday and finishing late afternoon on the Sunday with two nights' accommodation, all meals and travel included.

For this first year we have chosen three quintessential garden locations: East Anglia (May), the Upper Cotswolds (June) and the Heart of Sussex (July).

Special offer

Book more than one Ring O' Roses break within the same year and we will offer a discount of £50 per tour. So, if you book all 3 tours you make a saving of £150.

May

The dry gravel garden at the Beth Chatto Gardens.

Wyken Hall

Feeringbury Manor

GARDENS OF EAST ANGLIA

Hosted by Dr Noël Kingsbury

17-19 May 2013

£895 per person

(with a single supplement of £75)

Our first Ring O' Roses is timed to run prior to Chelsea Flower Show. It includes visits to beautiful private gardens in a typically 'English' region of rural Britain. The gardens live up to their evocative names: Columbine Hall, Parsonage Farm, Wyken Hall, Feeringbury Manor and Saling Hall. At all you will be met for special guided tours to learn the essentials of creating wonderful gardens in this quiet corner of old England. You will stay at The Angel Hotel in Bury St Edmunds where traditional Georgian elegance meets contemporary design with an award-winning restaurant. No visit to the region would be complete without a trip to the Beth Chatto Gardens, where you'll also benefit from a ten per cent discount on plant sales at the gardens' excellent nursery.

TOUR LEADER **Dr Noël Kingsbury**
Noël is a lecturer and planting designer, and is known internationally as a writer on plants and gardens. His work appears regularly in GARDENS ILLUSTRATED.

EXCLUSIVE
WEEKEND
GARDEN
BREAKS

June

The gardens at Bourton House include herbaceous borders and fine topiary.

Upton Wold

Kiftsgate

GARDENS OF THE UPPER COTSWOLDS

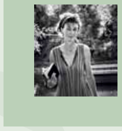
Hosted by Helena Attlee

14-16 June 2013

£969 per person

(with a single supplement of £100)

The northern Cotswolds is a beautiful region of rolling hills and far-reaching views interspersed with ochre-coloured manor houses and cottages surrounded by a wealth of wonderful, high-calibre gardens, long traditions of craftsmanship evident in the architecture, interiors and landscapes. We have selected private gardens including Stone House, Bourton House, Upton Wold and a special opening at the outstanding Kiftsgate. Plus we've arranged a container planting demonstration at Whichford Pottery, renowned for its stylish terracotta pots. You stay at the award-winning Manor House Hotel in the Cotswold market town of Moreton-in-Marsh, where you are assured a warm welcome and good food.



TOUR LEADER **Helena Attlee**
An acclaimed author on the culture and history of gardens both in this country and abroad, Helena has led numerous trips, lectured widely and contributes regularly to magazines.

July

Gravetye Manor, former home of naturalist gardener William Robinson.

Glyndebourne

Clinton Lodge

GARDENS OF THE HEART OF SUSSEX

Hosted by David Wheeler

12-14 July 2013

£998 per person

(with a single supplement of £100)

This is indeed a star-studded garden visiting experience, including guided tours to the gardens of Gravetye Manor, Glyndebourne and Great Dixter, as well as the delectable Clinton Lodge and dreamy Sussex Prairies, ending up with a chance to purchase wonderful plants at Marchants Hardy Plants. For this tour we are focusing on the heart of Sussex, including the wooded Weald and rolling Downlands but on one afternoon venture eastwards to Great Dixter for a special opening to include a meeting with head gardener Fergus Garrett. We have chosen Ockenden Manor Hotel a charming and tranquil Elizabethan Manor House, offering the very best of hospitality and cuisine recognised by AA and Michelin awards.

TOUR LEADER **David Wheeler**
David has a lifelong interest in plants, gardens and garden-making. He is editor of *Hortus* and *The Penguin Book of Garden Writing*. He gardens eight acres on the Welsh borders.

Booking details for Ring O' Roses garden breaks

For further information about these trips, day-to-day activities, hotel accommodation and details of how to book, please contact Boxwood Tours, Rhiw, Llanbedr, Gwynedd LL45 2NT, UK

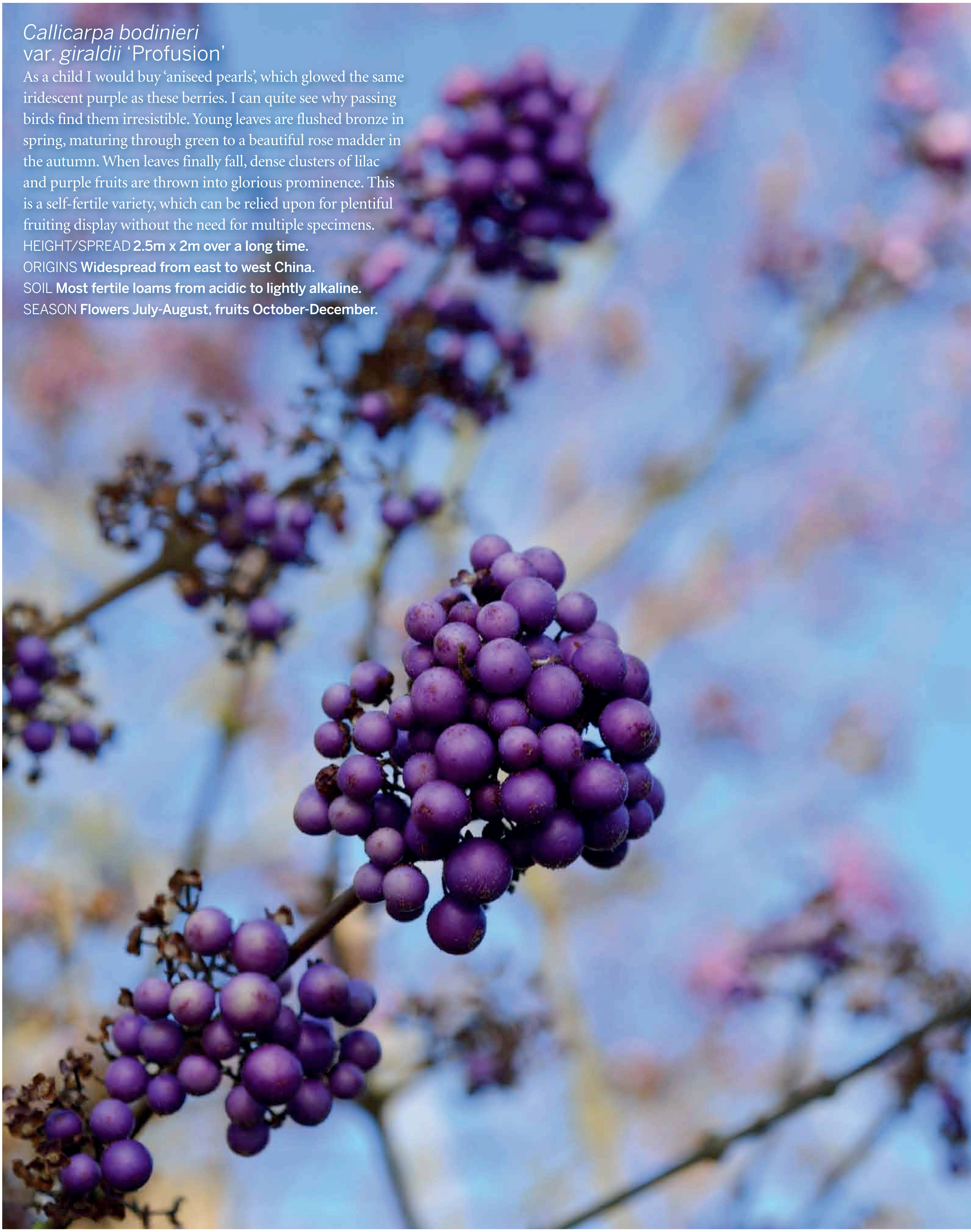
Tel **+44 (0)1341 241717** Email **mail@boxwoodtours.co.uk** Website **www.boxwoodtours.com**

NOTE itineraries are subject to confirmation. Places are limited, so early booking is recommended.

Callicarpa bodinieri var. *giraldii* ‘Profusion’

As a child I would buy ‘aniseed pearls’, which glowed the same iridescent purple as these berries. I can quite see why passing birds find them irresistible. Young leaves are flushed bronze in spring, maturing through green to a beautiful rose madder in the autumn. When leaves finally fall, dense clusters of lilac and purple fruits are thrown into glorious prominence. This is a self-fertile variety, which can be relied upon for plentiful fruiting display without the need for multiple specimens.

HEIGHT/SPREAD **2.5m x 2m over a long time.**
ORIGINS **Widespread from east to west China.**
SOIL **Most fertile loams from acidic to lightly alkaline.**
SEASON **Flowers July-August, fruits October-December.**



December plants

Nine plants to add colour, form and fauna to the garden in the midst of the winter months

WORDS CHRIS MARCHANT PHOTOGRAPHS JASON INGRAM

CHARLIE HOPKINSON

Chris Marchant is co-owner of Orchard Dene Nurseries in Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire, a wholesale grower specialising in hardy herbaceous plants.

This is the last part of this series. Fergus Garrett, head gardener at Great Dixter, begins a new series in the February 2013 issue.

Malus 'Evereste'

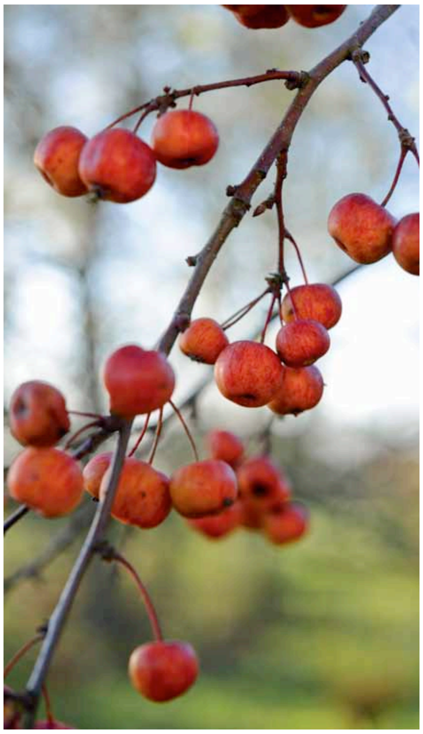
One of the merits of this small tree, being self-fertile and very floriferous, is that it is perfect for even a small garden. In the spring, dark pink buds unfold to pure white blooms with a sweet apple blossom scent. In turn, this gives rise to an abundance of small, perfectly formed orange-red apples, their surface streaked with scarlet striations. Cut branches make excellent indoor floral decoration and the fruits make a rich amber crab apple jelly. What better gift for the winter table – if you have the time.

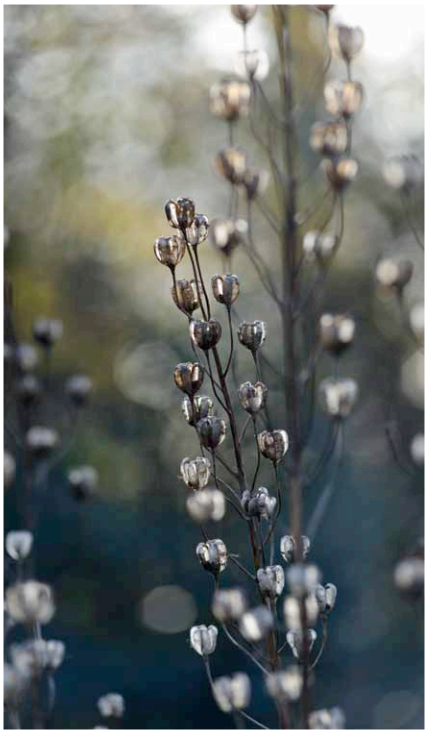
HEIGHT/SPREAD Depends on rootstock. Commonly MM106 gives 3-4m x 3m.

ORIGINS Hybrid of garden origin.

SOIL Most fertile garden loams.

SEASON Flowers May-June, fruits September-December.





Lilium martagon

A plant with dual appeal. In June, upright stems carry ascending whorls of flowers, each small and demure, in shades of plum, pink and white, their exaggerated reflex petals and pronounced stamens adding a welcome dash of colour to woodland edge or meadow. By August, flowers give way to plump, geometric seed capsules, their coats smooth and polished. Bleached by sun and dried by summer winds, they achieve a lightness of colour and texture which endures late into the winter. Falling seeds will ensure your clumps expand.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 100-125cm x 40cm.

ORIGINS Widespread across southern Europe, to Siberia.

SOIL Tolerant of most soils but preferring neutral to alkaline conditions.

SEASON Flowers June, seed heads stand into December.

Lunaria annua

This is a plant with twin peaks. Early spring flowers of rosy purple give rise to papery 'moon-like' seeds, which are now commanding attention throughout the borders. At first, outer seed husks appear a rather dingy flat beige, but patience is rewarded, and as the seeds ripen, the outer faces fall away to reveal a perfect white surface with pearl-like luminosity. Impatient gardeners may assist the process by gently rubbing between forefinger and thumb. Be sure to let some seeds fall to perpetuate the display for next year.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 60cm x 30cm.

ORIGINS Central and southern Europe.

SOIL Any fertile garden loam.

SEASON Flowers May, seeds November-December.

Fagus sylvatica

Each winter I am struck by the delicious dark caramel colour of this foliage as it glows in shafts of wintery sunshine. *Fagus sylvatica*, common beech, is so versatile a gardener need be constrained only by imagination and space. Whether clipped hedge, topiaried forms, or as full-grown trees, the species punctuate the landscape with rich tones that offer welcome contrast to the greys and greens of winter. Invest in a bundle of hedging plants and start your own family topiary series for 2025.

HEIGHT/SPREAD Often limited by cultural intervention.

ORIGINS Europe, eastwards to Ukraine. Southern Scandinavia.

SOIL Well-drained fertile soil from alkaline to mildly acidic. Dislikes waterlogging.

SEASON New foliage in April, autumn colours from October-December.

DAVE PORTER / ALAMY

Hydrangea quercifolia Snowflake (= 'Brido')

It is the giant oak-like leaves of this plant that draw comment at this end of the year, turning to gregarious shades of russet, burgundy and red. The arching clusters of triangular-shaped flowers, which appear first in July as creamy white, fade to a pretty pinkish hue by September. By December they have transformed into senesced golden cones – perfect for Christmas. Protect from drought and shelter from prevailing winds.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 2m x 2m, though somewhat lax in habit.

ORIGINS Species native to south-eastern United States of America.

SOIL Humus-rich, moisture-retentive soil, neutral to acidic.

SEASON Flowers July-September, good foliage colour until December.

Places to visit

Chris Marchant names some of her favourite gardens and other places to see plants at their best.

Waddesdon Plant Centre, situated in the old kitchen gardens of Waddesdon Manor, has a particular sparkle at this time of year. Their discerning buyer ensures December ranges include a variety of indoor floral displays: forced bulbs, scented *Narcissus* 'Paper White' and flamboyant amarylis to light up a gloomy corner. Decking the house for winter celebrations offers a pleasant distraction from freezing outdoor temperatures. Every year the Christmas decorations at Waddesdon have a different theme, with this year offering a continuation of their tour of the five European countries where the founding sons of the Rothschild dynasty made their fortunes. England is

Waddesdon Manor, Christmas display.

WWW.WADDESDON.ORG.UK

Ballota pseudodictamnus

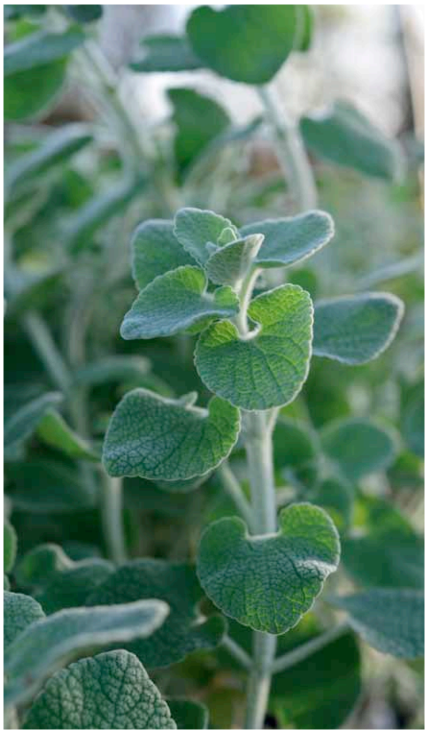
There are few grey-leaved plants that maintain their elegance throughout the winter. *Ballota* is an exception, and valuable for that reason. Grey-green foliage has a soft, downy covering that catches the light attractively and gives a silvery sheen. Small, rounded, alternate leaves ascend stems, which resemble silver pipe-cleaners, forming attractive loose clumps. The effect is to bring a pool of illumination, and the illusion of warmer days to dull wintery borders and terraces. Plants require a good free-draining soil and should be reshaped each spring to maintain good form.

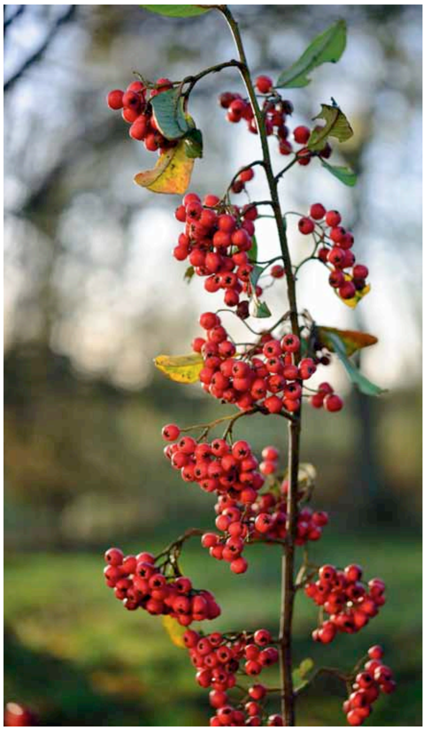
HEIGHT/SPREAD 40cm x 35cm.

ORIGINS Dry habitats of the Mediterranean into Asia.

SOIL Free-draining, warmer soils.

SEASON Evergreen foliage, flowers in June.





Cotoneaster x watereri 'Cornubia'

Believed to be a hybrid of two diploid species: *Cotoneaster frigidus* from the Himalayas and *C. salicifolia* from central China. The hybrid has occurred more than once, giving rise to several different forms, but 'Cornubia' makes a very elegant, pendulous small tree with an abundance of vibrant red fruits through the autumn into winter. The effect is a welcome rush of colour in the last months of the year. Its diminutive stature makes it eminently suitable for smaller urban gardens which demand high return on invested space.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 5-8m x 3-5m.

ORIGINS Hybrid from North Indian and Chinese origin.

SOIL Well-drained garden loam.

SEASON Flowers May, fruits October-December.

Vinca difformis

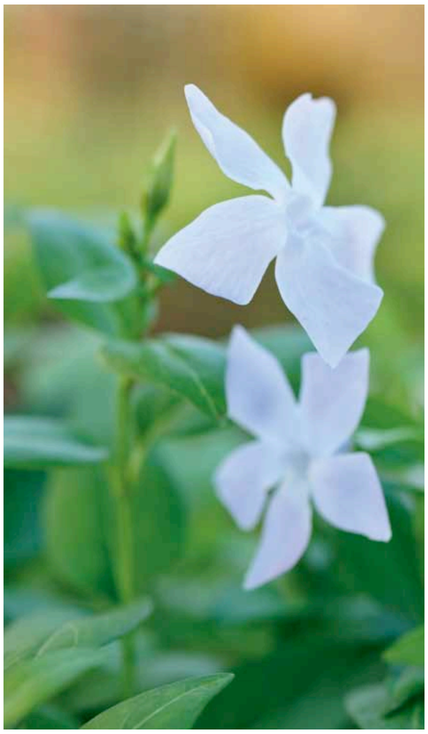
Coming from warmer climates, this *Vinca* is marginally less hardy than other species, but to my mind its grace and extensive flowering period make it worth the small risk. Arching stems erupt from a central clump, bearing unusually large five-petalled flowers in shades of French powder blue that command attention. The floral display peaks in spring and autumn, though a smattering of flowers continues intermittently throughout most of the year. An enduring under-storey to woodland plantings, which requires only an annual trim in February to maintain an orderly habit.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 35cm x 35cm.

ORIGINS North Africa and south-west Europe.

SOIL Any fertile garden loam.

SEASON April-May, October-December.



the chosen nation for 2012. (House open Wed-Fri 12-4pm, Sat-Sun 11am-4pm). If you do get chilled, the Plant Centre café offers fresh coffee and home-made cakes. Pant Centre open Mon-Sat 10am-5.30pm, Sun 10.30am-4.30pm. Go to www.waddesdon.org.uk for further details.

Local Christmas Farmer's Markets Now is the time to start thinking about packing your pantry with festive food in time for this year's Christmas celebrations. It's also an opportunity to celebrate all that is good about home-grown produce for the table: fine regional cheeses, cured meats and smoked fish; local wines and piquant relishes to spike a jaded winter palette. And alongside these mouthwatering treats, Christmas farmer's markets are great for picking up festive essentials while soaking up the seasonal atmosphere. What's more, these plentiful and tempting displays remind us that cold weather does at least bring on a hearty appetite! Check the website www.localfoods.org.uk for the market nearest to you.

Ludlow Christmas market

PETER LOPERMAN / ALAMY

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Snuggle up

With Christmas a time for indulgence and rejoicing, the little time left for your garden should be spent storing and pruning, making sure your plot is ready to burst into life again when the sun returns

WORDS **LIA LEENDERTZ** ILLUSTRATION **GEORGINA LUCK**

PRACTICAL JOB

Plant hedges

Winter is the time to buy cheap and tough bare-root hedging plants and to get them into the ground. These are long-term plantings that will serve you for many years, and you want to nurture the roots. They appreciate getting this little head-start on the leaves, and will meander down into your lovingly prepared soil (for it will be lovingly prepared, and enriched with organic matter too) and discover reserves of moisture and nutrients with which to support new growth. Hedges Direct www.hedgesdirect.co.uk offer a native mix including either hawthorn or hornbeam (depending on your soil) plus wild cherry, field maple, dog rose and hazel, chosen for their long period of interest as well as for the range of wildlife they will support.

THINGS TO DO

If you haven't got much time, just do these essential tasks…

Spread your compost across the ground around plants and allow the worms to take it below the soil over the winter.

Shore up brassicas by earthing soil up around the stems to prevent wind rock.

Vines should be pruned before Christmas. Any later and the sap is rising, so the wounds will 'bleed' sap.

Pamper your tools: clean, sharpen and oil secateurs and take your mower for a service.

PRACTICAL JOB

Make a potato store

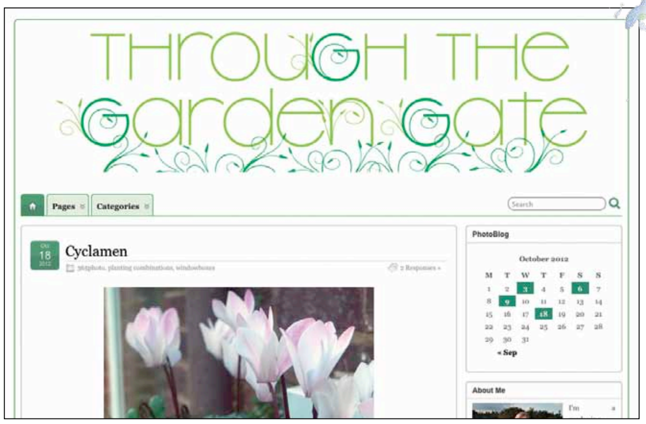
I recently saw this at Alys Fowler's allotment and determined to do it myself. Alys has dug a large hole in the ground and sunk a lidded plastic dustbin into it. The lid sits a good 20cm or so above the surface so there is no chance of flooding, and locks shut, to keep creatures out. The bottom of the bin never freezes, and so it makes the perfect cool but frost-free spot for Alys to store carrots and other root veg (in a layer of sand at the base), and potatoes and apples (in boxes) which she can access all winter long. A very handy resource to have up your sleeve.

READ THIS

Through the Garden Gate

www.throughthegardengate.co.uk/blog

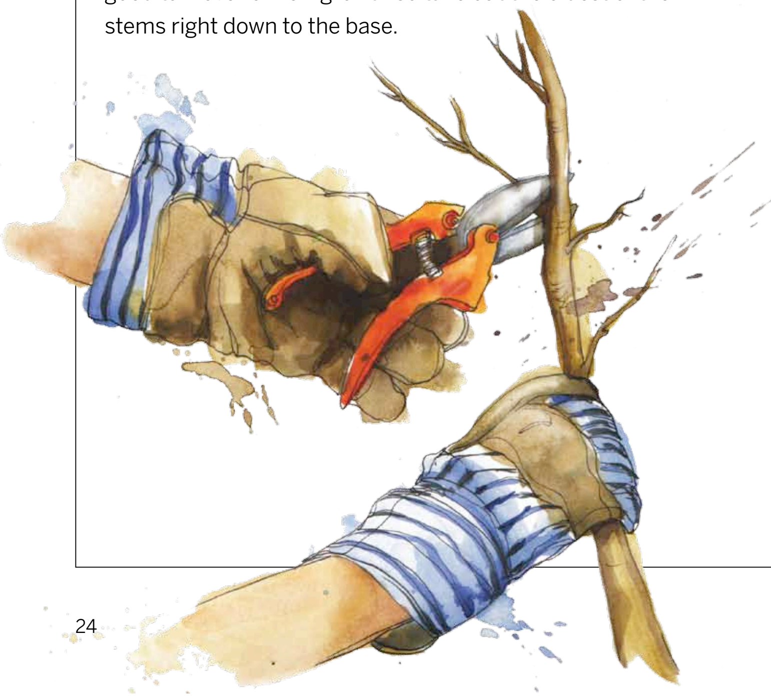
Veronica Peerless works for *Which? Gardening* magazine, but is 'a garden journalist without a garden'. This makes her blog an appreciation of other people's gardens. Every now and then this involves Veronica's insight into a professional or public garden, but more often she writes about snippets that have caught her eye around the streets of London: a beautiful window box or house façade, a collection of pots or a public roof garden. Her writing is lively and funny: 'St John's Wood has the highest box-ball-per-capita ratio of anywhere in the world and more people are employed to cut topiary there than in the whole of Italy'. An insight into the mind of someone whose magpie-like eye is always drawn to the greenery among the concrete.

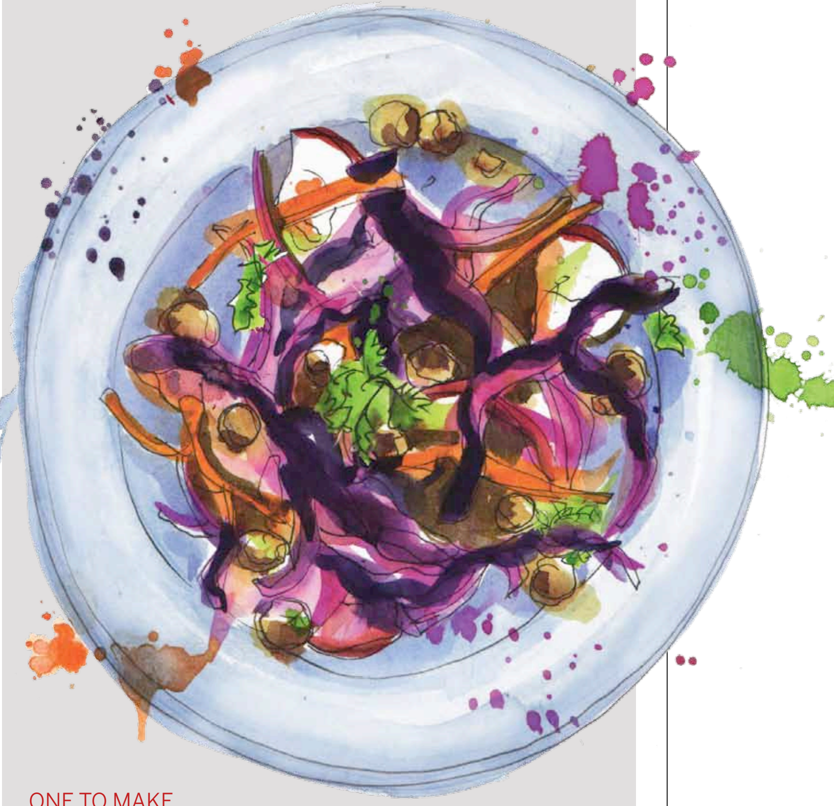


PRACTICAL JOB

Fruit pruning

Winter pruning of soft fruit and tree fruit is carried out once the leaves have dropped and you can see the shape. First up, remove anything damaged or diseased with a sharp pair of secateurs or a pair of loppers. Then go for crossing growth and branches that rub against each other. Next try to create an open centre so the bush or tree has good air flow. Fruit bushes need a good turnover of new growth so take out the oldest of their stems right down to the base.





ONE TO MAKE

Winter slaw

Strong, hearty winter vegetables make great slaw ingredients. Add apples and autumn-harvested nuts to make a colourful and crunchy salad.

SALAD
¼ of a red cabbage, thinly sliced
1 apple, thinly sliced
3 carrots, grated
¼ celeriac, thinly sliced
¼ red onion, thinly sliced
50g hazelnuts

DRESSING
250ml plain yoghurt
2 tsp Dijon mustard
Juice of half a lemon
Handful of chopped parsley

METHOD

Toast the nuts in a dry frying pan for a few minutes until they begin to brown and release their nutty scent, then put them into a bowl and leave to cool. Combine all of the chopped and grated ingredients in a large bowl and add the cooled nuts. Mix all of the dressing ingredients together and add to the salad before serving, tossing well.

Capel Manor College

Starting January 2013

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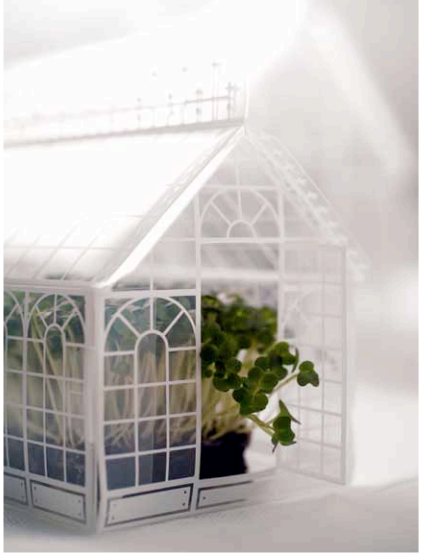
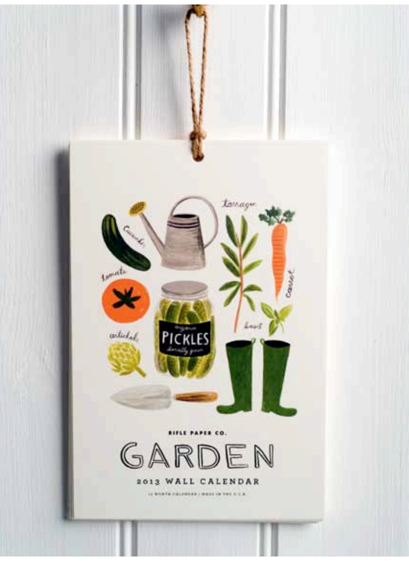
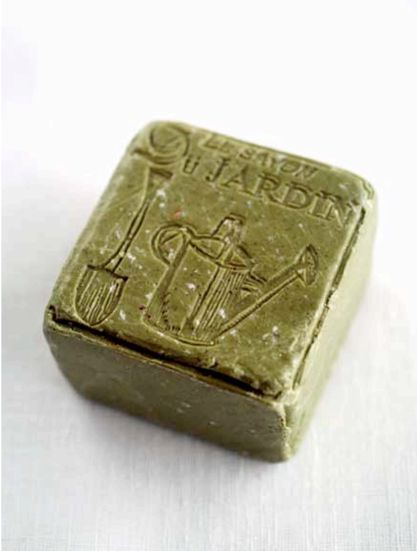
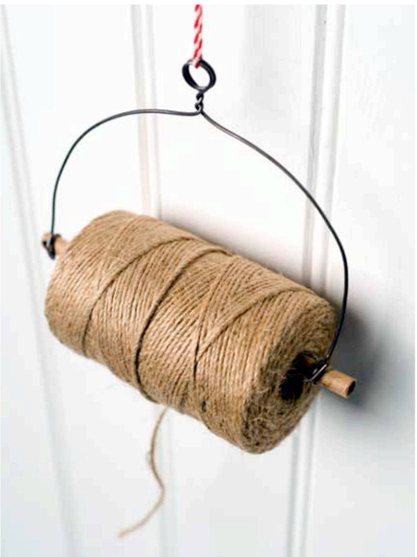
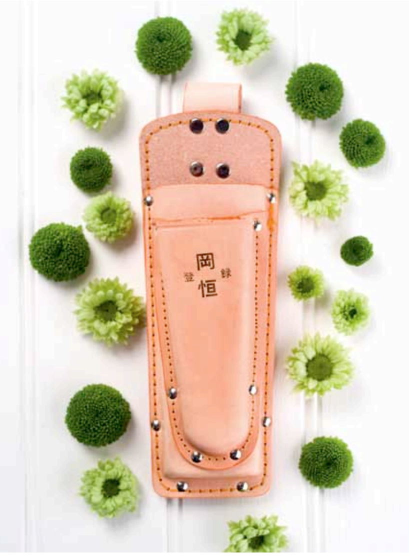


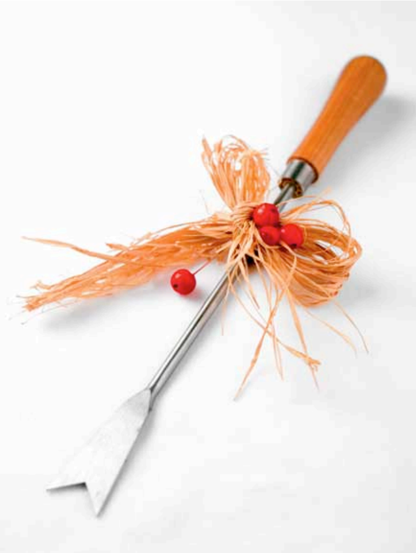




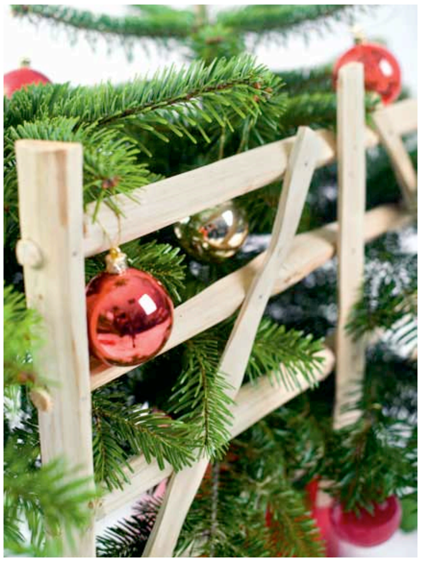
ABOVE LEFT 'The Phoenix' mini-greenhouse by Piet Design, €9.50 each, various sizes and designs available from Thinking of Holland. MIDDLE 2013 Garden wall calendar by Rifle Paper Co, $16, available from Liberty. RIGHT Gardener's soap, £5.25, Baileys Home & Garden.

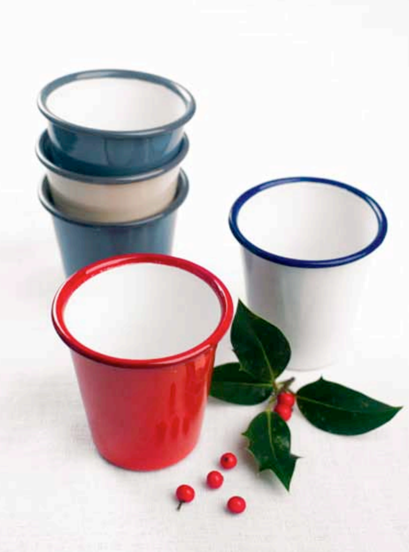


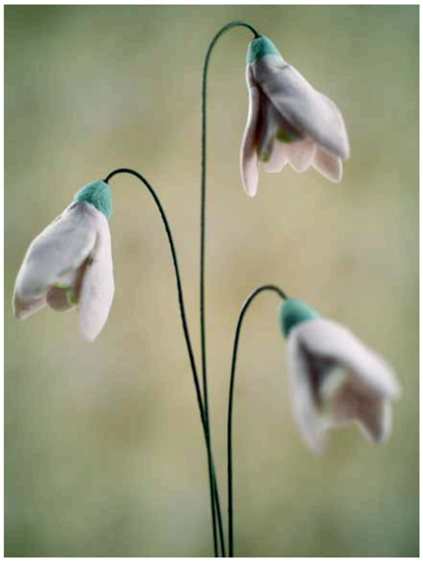




ABOVE LEFT Thick garden twine on a simple wire holder, £5.95, Drift Living. MIDDLE Double tool holster in leather, £18, Niwaki. RIGHT Cherry wood handled dandelion digger, from €20.50, De Wiltfang.







ABOVE LEFT Handmade chestnut hurdles, £10 each, Great Dixter. Christmas trees, £16.99 each, loaned by Riverside Garden Centre, Bristol, 0117 966 7535, www.riversidegardencentre.com MIDDLE Enamel tumblers, £4.99 each, Falcon Enamelware. RIGHT Porcelain snowdrops, £12, Dee Puddy Home & Interiors.

Gifts for gardeners

Our guide to the best and most beautiful gifts for gardeners this Christmas

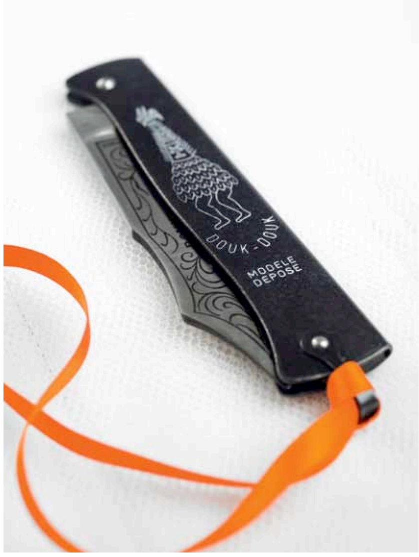
PHOTOGRAPHS **SEAN MALYON** STYLING **AMY GRENHAM**

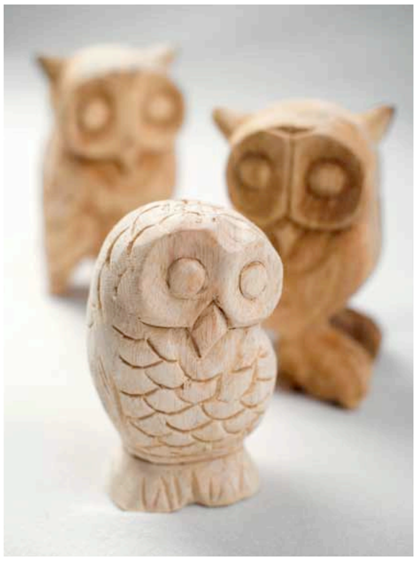
1 litre metal watering cans, £9.50 each, available in a range of colours from the Eden Project Shop.

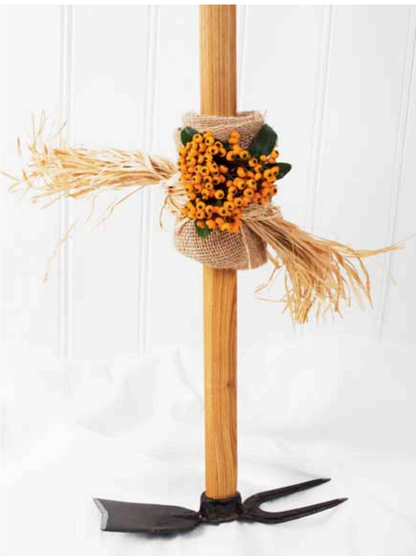
• For details of all stockists turn to page 100.

Price range: £20-£50

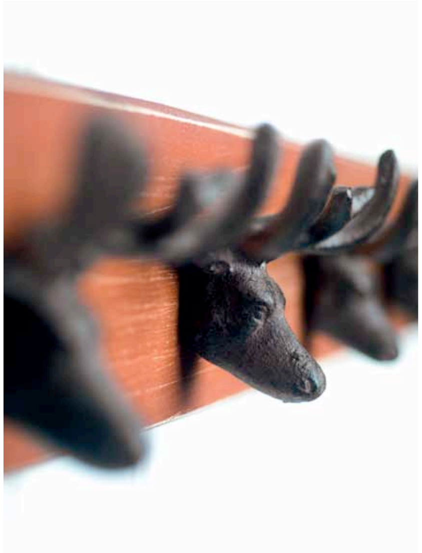
Handmade chestnut ladder, available in a range of sizes from Great Dixter, prices starting from £45.

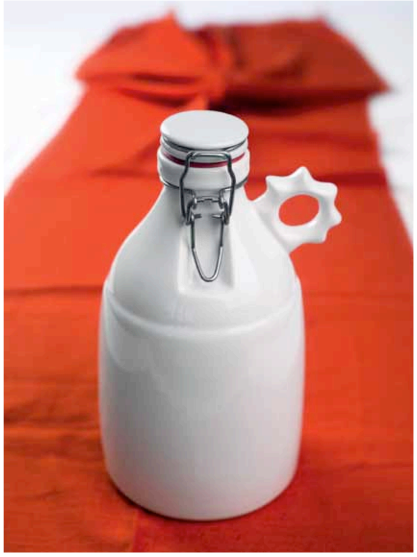


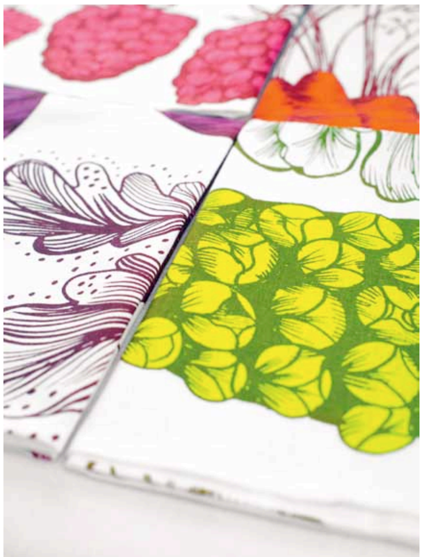




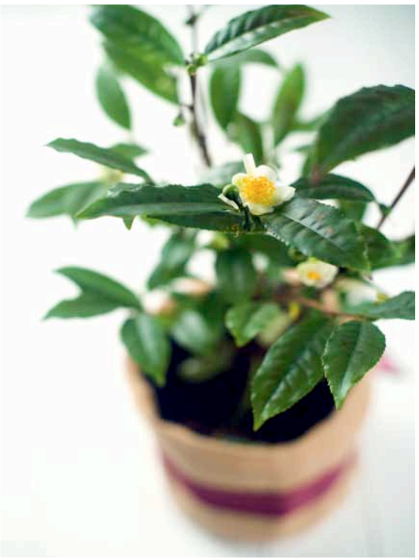
ABOVE LEFT Large Douk-Douk Sorcier knife, £22, Objects of Use. **MIDDLE** Sculpted wooden owls, from £30-45 each, Plümo. **RIGHT** Swabian Iron and Steel Works forged Broad Blade Hoe, £31, Manufactum.

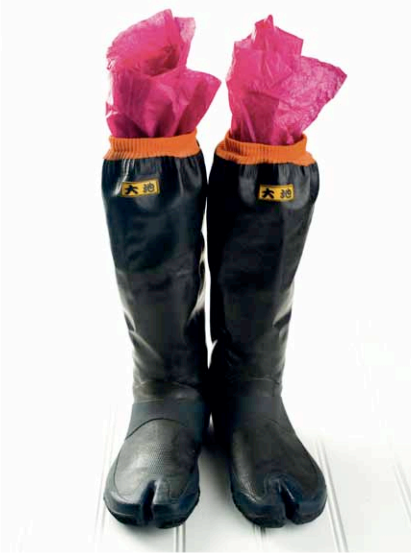


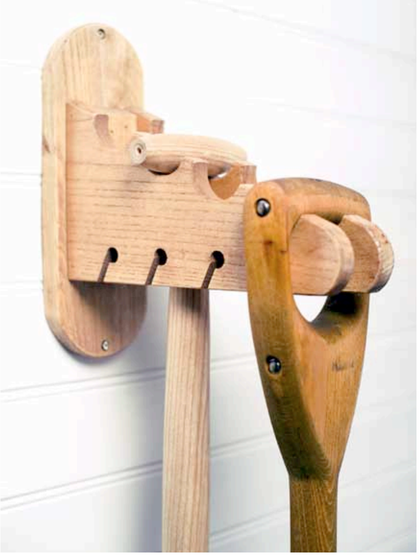




ABOVE LEFT Cast iron stag wall hook rack, £29.95, The Worm That Turned. **MIDDLE** Gloss white 'Sprocket' hand-cast growler, traditionally for beers and ciders, $65, The Portland Growler Co. **RIGHT** Boxed set of four vegetable print napkins, £31, Lush Designs.





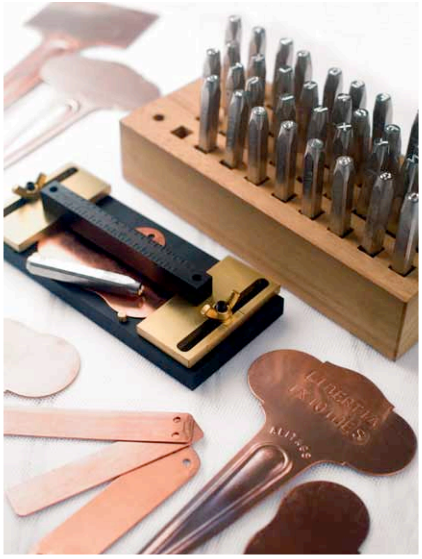


ABOVE LEFT *Camellia sinensis* is the common tea plant, also worth growing for its white, scented flowers in autumn, £21.50, from Trehane Nursery. Also includes a packet of locally blended tea from the Dorset Tea Company. **MIDDLE** Rubber 'jika-tabi' gardening boots, £47.50, Objects of Use. **RIGHT** Garden tool hanger, £20, Cox & Cox.

• For details of all stockists turn to page 100.

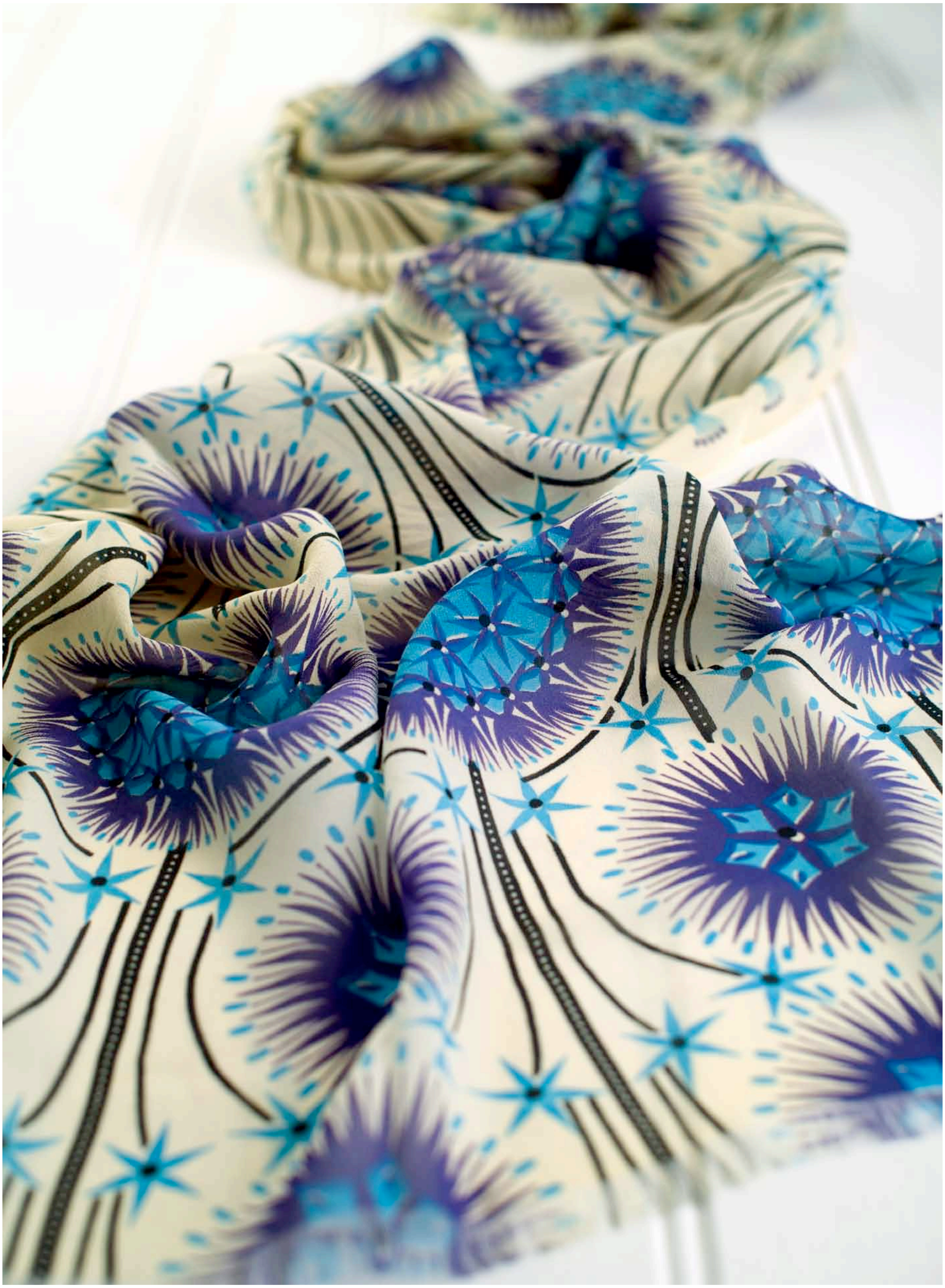
Price range: over £50

ABOVE LEFT Single blade polished stainless steel 'Lambfoot' knife, £85, Objects of Use. **MIDDLE** Woven oak basket with hazel rim, £105, Whippet Grey. **RIGHT** The 'Thurloe' classic lace-up rubber boot in dark olive, £79, Hunter.



ABOVE LEFT Professional plant labelling kit, with jig, character punches and wooden holding box, £237.50 from Alitags (various labels available and priced separately). **MIDDLE** Vintage mistletoe cutters, from £65 each, Garden & Wood. **RIGHT** Large copper riddle, £55, Implementations.

ABOVE LEFT Glass and cast iron Victorian style cloche, £109.99, Crocus. **MIDDLE** Haws leather bucket bag, £79.99, Garden Gifts Direct. **RIGHT** 'Trekker' Kelly Kettle including stainless steel cook set, £54.25, Kelly Kettle.



Hand screen printed 'Allium' silk scarf, £85, Cressida Bell. ☐

- For details of all stockists turn to page 100.

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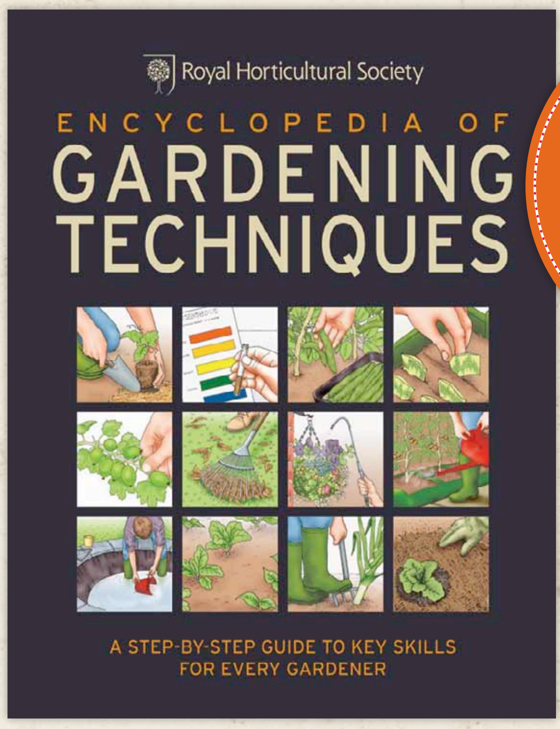

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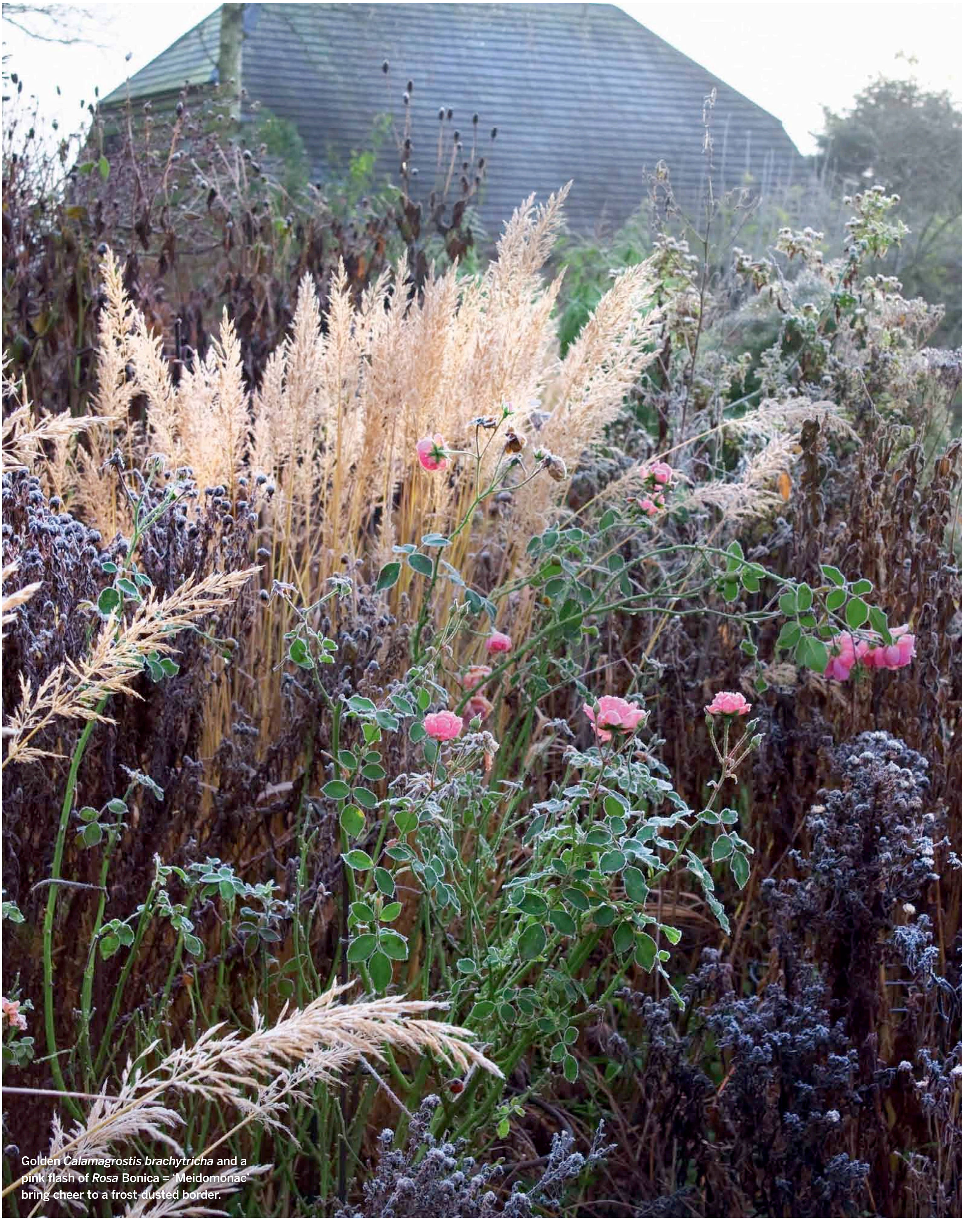
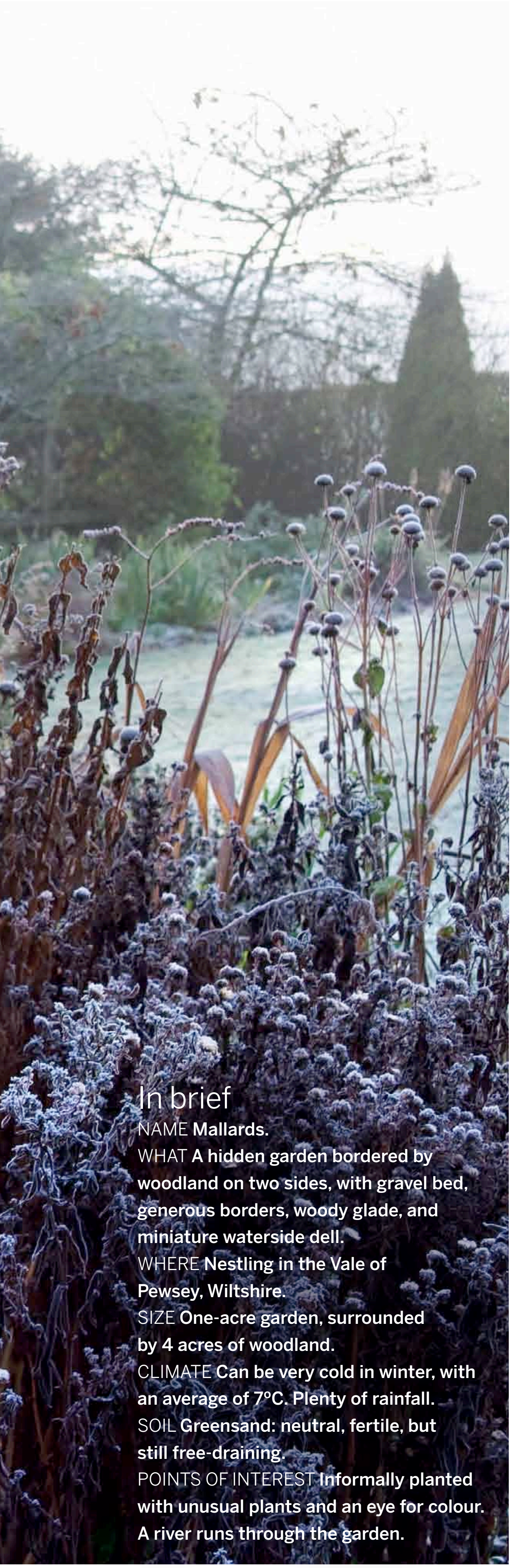


Golden *Calamagrostis brachytricha* and a pink flash of *Rosa* Bonica = 'Meidomonac' bring cheer to a frost-dusted border.

Shapes, shadows and silhouettes

The one-acre garden at Mallards has a free spirit, a river running through it and a stark beauty even during the cold winter months

WORDS **CAMILLA SWIFT** PHOTOGRAPHS **LYNN KEDDIE/GAP PHOTOS**



Jenny Papé gazes out over her magnificently frosted one–acre garden. “I never consciously set out to create a winter garden,” she admits. Contained within the dramatic chalk escarpments of the Pewsey Vale, the garden at Mallards is surrounded by woodland on two sides, with a tributary of the River Avon running through it. Bright and sunny but colder than average in winter, thanks to the cold air from Salisbury Plain, the garden faces south but enjoys some bumper frosts. “It just rolls down and stays here, nowhere else to go,” says Jenny. On the plus side it sits on a band of greensand, ideal soil, easy to work and suitable for almost all plants.

Gardening has always been important to Jenny, a trained botanist. When she came with her husband to Mallards, she found the bare bones of a garden: old deciduous trees, some big shrubs, a narrow herbaceous border. She has planted all the rest. “This isn’t a garden that’s been designed,” she says. “It’s grown, developed, and evolved. I think of it as a tapestry with rich threads of colour, shape and texture running through it.”

Any planning for winter has evolved as part of the overall garden plan. The generous borders that ribbon through the garden are scattered with plants that bring vibrant colour or structural interest when the foliage has gone, and all summer brightness has faded, making way for skeletal silhouettes of *Phlomis*, *Eryngium*, architectural seedheads of *Allium*, poppy, and sculptural grasses. These Jenny leaves; partly for the look of the garden, partly for the insects and birds, and partly because “I’m not very good at re-organising the borders – such heavy work, and I like things to mingle.”

In a Mediterranean gravel bed near the house, against a backdrop of dark green *Cupressus*, a large *Euphorbia*, like a multi-headed hydra, provides colour and shape as it snakes through *Cedrus deodara* ‘Golden Horizon’. *Abeliophyllum distichum* and the tiny *Baccharis patagonica* smell wonderful. *Corokia cotoneaster* and *Picea glauca* var. *albertiana* ‘Conica’ are sculptural gems and *Eryngium* self-seeds everywhere. In the woodland and riverside dell, ferns “find places they like and I leave them”. Jenny’s imaginative use of groundcover in areas she hasn’t time to cultivate really comes into its own in winter. *Hedera canariensis*, *Epimedium*, *Tellima*, all add to the warm reds, rich browns, khaki greens and silver fawns of a winter palette flecked with a flash of pink rose, a cluster of scarlet berries, a tiny purple iris, or an unexpected fragrance.

An accomplished artist, Jenny is strong on structure, another essential component of the good winter ▷

In brief

NAME **Mallards.**

WHAT **A hidden garden bordered by woodland on two sides, with gravel bed, generous borders, woody glade, and miniature waterside dell.**

WHERE **Nestling in the Vale of Pewsey, Wiltshire.**

SIZE **One-acre garden, surrounded by 4 acres of woodland.**

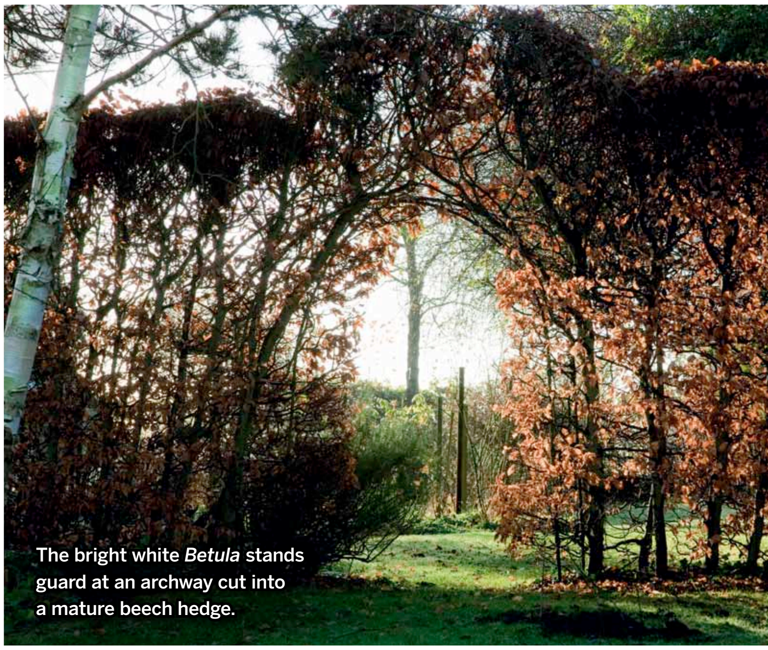
CLIMATE **Can be very cold in winter, with an average of 7°C. Plenty of rainfall.**

SOIL **Greensand: neutral, fertile, but still free-draining.**

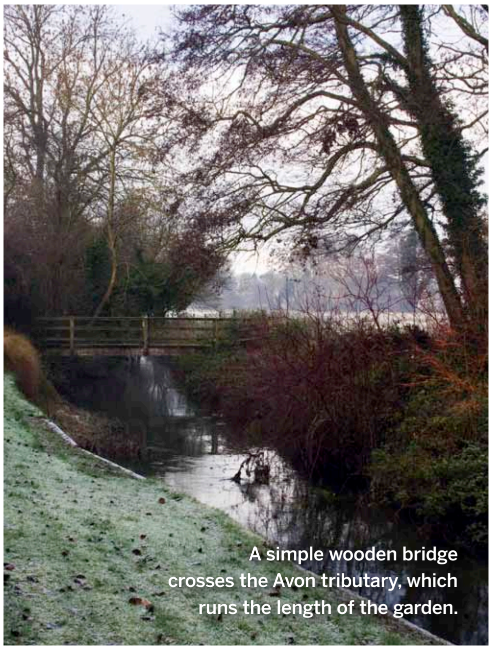
POINTS OF INTEREST **Informally planted with unusual plants and an eye for colour. A river runs through the garden.**

In the view to the woodland garden, conifers stand out against the backdrop of bare deciduous trees.

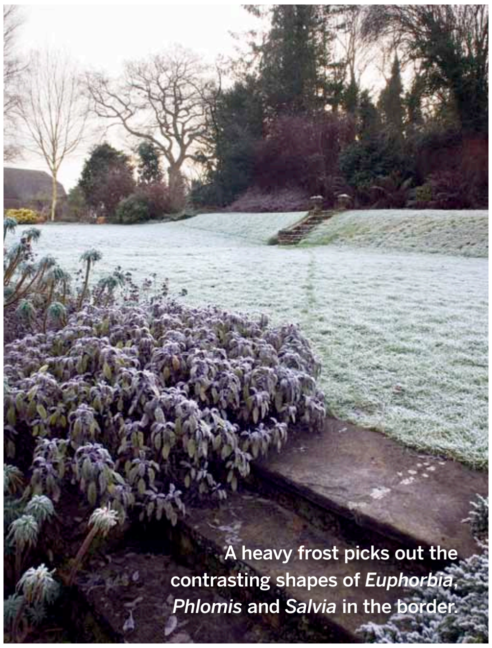
Evergreens and conifers become the main points of interest around the house in the winter months.



The bright white *Betula* stands guard at an archway cut into a mature beech hedge.


A simple wooden bridge crosses the Avon tributary, which runs the length of the garden.

Jenny Papé with *Euphorbia characias* subsp. *wulfenii*


A heavy frost picks out the contrasting shapes of *Euphorbia*, *Phlomis* and *Salvia* in the border.

> *"Jenny particularly loves the contrast between light and dark areas in the garden when the low sun catches details of textured bark, stems and branches"*

▷ garden. Her garden is filled with interesting shapes. "If you've got conifers and variegated foliage and things that are going to stay here all year, you already have structure and a backdrop so you don't actually need to add a lot of extra colour," she says. Conifers, defined by the great Alan Bloom as 'the continuity links in a winter garden', are a favourite along with evergreens, whose glossy green leaves come into their own in winter. Sharply defined silhouettes of deciduous trees add to the overall structure.

Perhaps the most wonderful aspect of the garden in winter is the light. Jenny particularly loves the contrast between light and dark areas in the garden when the low winter sun catches details of textured bark, stems and branches, then picks out little surprises, illuminating a pile of brightly coloured leaves, or throwing a halo of winter light round an interesting seedhead. And like all good artists she has a natural eye for perspective and focal points. Staddle stones, a sundial, a flight of steps and a small bridge variously punctuate the underlying rhythm of the meandering stone flagged path; while a carefully placed silver birch shines like a beacon against a large beech hedge.

On this bright, cold winter's day, shimmering cobweb necklaces dangle from bare branches. Down on the river, light is dancing on the water. This must be what is meant by the unrestrained beauty of the winter garden. □

• See Jenny Papé's pick of favourite winter plants on page 38.

Preparing the garden for winter

When planning a winter garden, think shadows, shapes and silhouettes, a low sun and unexpected dashes of vivid colour and scent

- If you plant even a corner of your garden with winter in mind, you will always have a reason to go out, whatever the weather.
- Create points of interest that will take you into the garden: a winding path, with staddle stones as markers, a cleverly planted tree, fragrant winter plants.
- Variegated plants, *Euonymus*, *Elaeagnus*, *Cornus* and ivy give additional light in winter.
- Tidy grasses, but don't cut down until spring.
- Fallen leaves on borders make good mulch; leave for the worms to take down; on lawns mow up and make into leaf mould.
- Conifers and clipped evergreens give the garden shape and structure but so can skeletal deciduous trees and shrubs while some perennials look as good in death as they do in full bloom, especially dusted with a frost and with stems intact.
- Groundcover such as *Epimedium*, *Heuchera*, *Tellima*, and *Lonicera japonica* 'Aureoreticulata' with its stippled leaf, comes into its own in winter.
- Don't be too hasty to wield secateurs or pruning saws in autumn, or too thorough. Tangled twigs make dramatic silhouettes, while sturdy *Phlomis* seedheads could last all winter. And you'll be sheltering insect life, possibly feeding the birds and leaving a framework that could lift your spirits through the bleakest of winters.

Plants for winter interest

Jenny believes that good winter planting should contain the following essential elements: scent, texture, and effect. Here are some her favourites:

PLANTS TO SMELL

1 ***Viburnum* x *bodnantense* 'Dawn'**
Hardy, upright and semi-evergreen this shrub can flower all winter in mild conditions, its fragrant pink flowers fading to white from October to March.

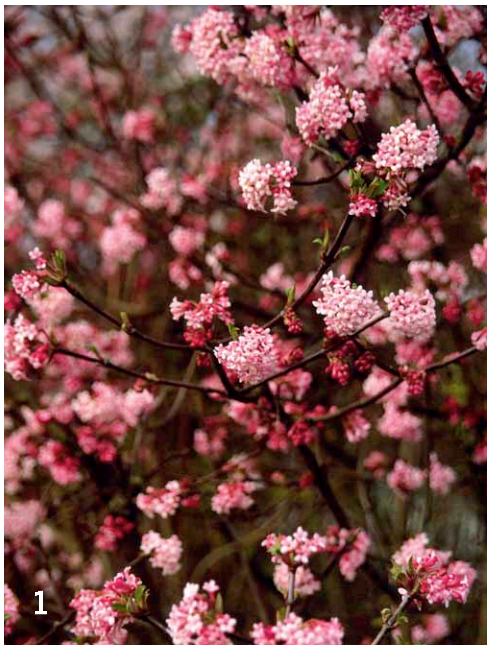
2 ***Sarcococca hookeriana* var. *digyna***
Hardy and shade-tolerant with slim dense dark green foliage, the powerful fragrance more than compensates for the minuteness of the flowers.

3 ***Lonicera* x *purpusii***
The creamy white flowers of this winter honeysuckle cling to bare branches in the depths of winter and throw out a wonderful citrusy scent that will stop you in your tracks.

4 ***Daphne bholua***
A semi-evergreen shrub with small, deep pink buds that open in January and February followed by rounded, purple-black berries. Thrives in a sunny, sheltered position. Plant next to a path where you can catch the scent.

5 ***Cercidiphyllum japonicum***
Beautiful, heart-shaped leaves which turn fantastic shades of yellow, purple and red in autumn. As they fall from the tree late in the year, they give off an aroma of burnt sugar or candyfloss.

6 ***Skimmia* x *confusa* 'Kew Green'**
A hardy evergreen shrub with aromatic leaves and clusters of fragrant greenish-white flowers that open in late winter. Plant with lime-green *Helleborus foetidus*, winter-flowering clematis and other evergreen shrubs such as *Sarcococca*.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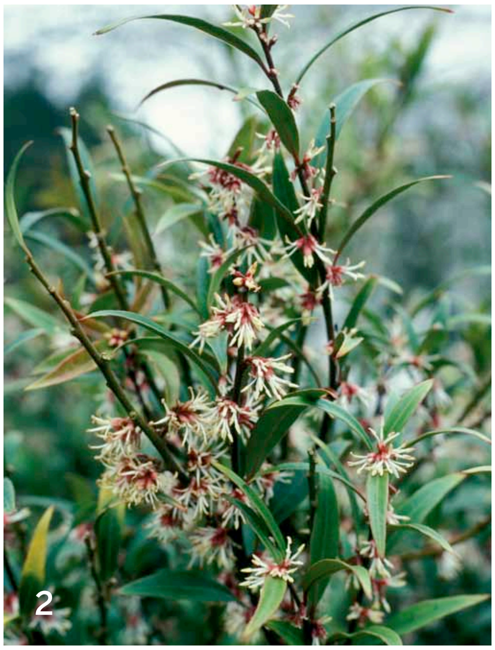
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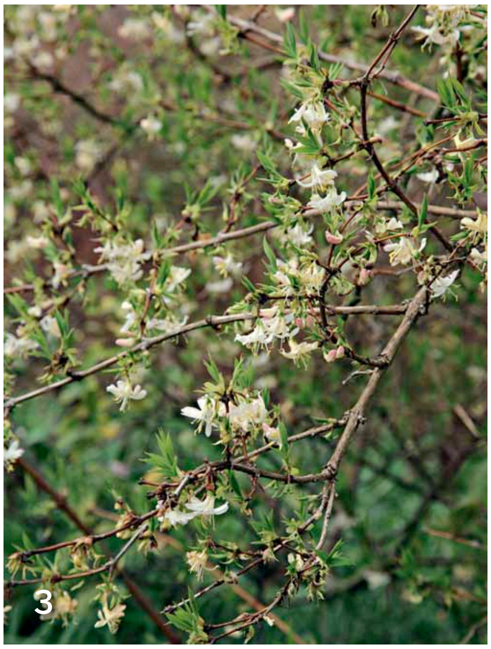
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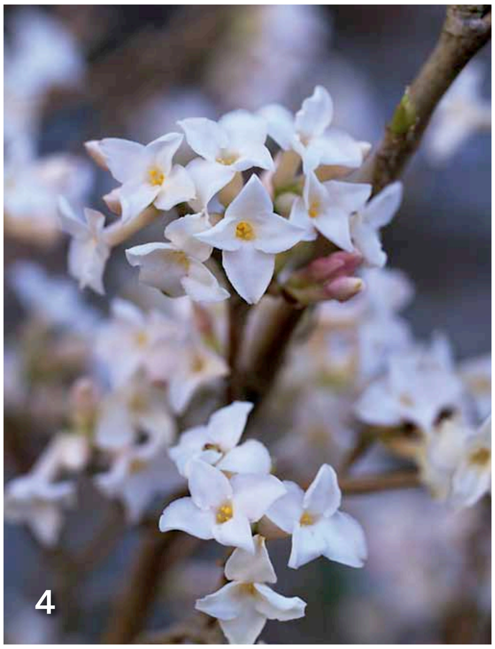
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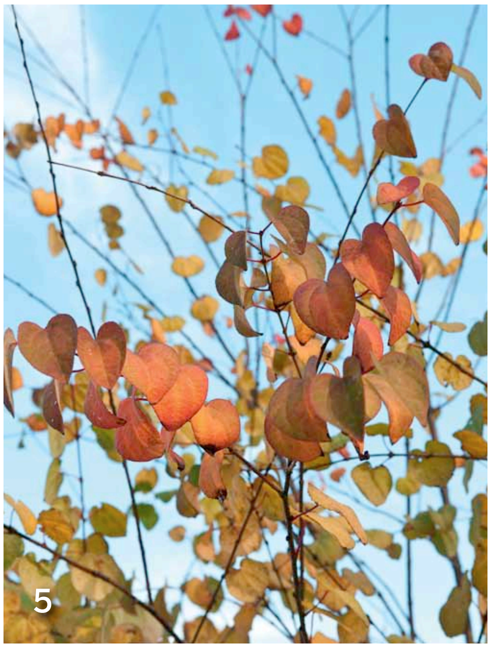
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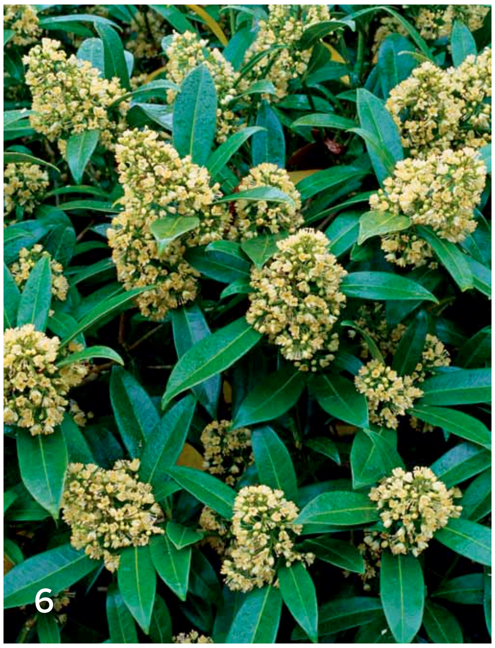
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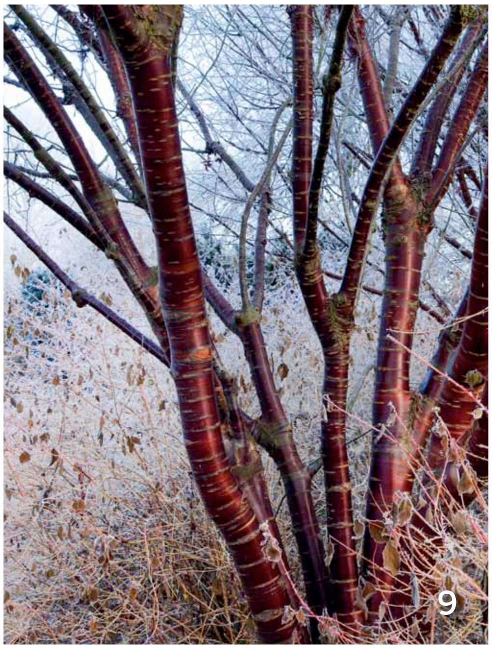
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PLANTS TO TOUCH

7 ***Pleioblastus viridistriatus***
A small evergreen bamboo with narrow, yellow and green striped leaves, which look as if they should be woody and coarse, when actually they are as smooth as a baby's cheek, and infinitely strokeable.

8 ***Molinia caerulea* 'Variegata'**
Or *Anemanthele lessoniana* or any perennial grasses with tufted seedheads that are still around late in the season. Perfect for running your fingers through.

9 ***Prunus serrula***
Tree bark comes out to play when the leaves aren't there to distract you. Also the silver birch *Betula utilis* var. *jacquemontii*, with bark as soft as the inside of an Edwardian lady's opera glove, and *Sequoiadendron giganteum*, which has bark like a giant red sponge.

PLANTS FOR EFFECT

10 ***Camellia williamsii* 'JC Williams'**
Beautiful single pink flowers that start opening at Christmas time and go on opening until April, sometimes May.

11 ***Arum italicum* 'Marmoratum'**
Tuberous perennial producing brightly marbled, arrow-head shaped foliage, which lasts all winter.

12 ***Asplenium scolopendrium***
Shining fronds suddenly appear in a mass of green glory and ripple through winter just as its neighbouring male ferns have turned to a rust-coloured mush.

YOU COULD ALSO TRY:

***Osmanthus heterophyllus* 'Variegatus'**
Grows near the river – its clean glossy foliage shines out brightly and is so useful in the house over the winter.

Winter bulbs
Cyclamen coum, *Eranthis hyemalis* and early species crocus. Carpets of successional winter colour.

Acer griseum
Its shaggy rusting bark looks wonderful backlit in the winter sun.

Winter walks
FOR GARDENERS

The poetic beauty of many landscapes is particularly affecting in winter, so it's worth making the effort to enjoy some of the finest scenery the country has to offer. What better way to enjoy a winter's day?

WORDS **JULIET ROBERTS**

1 Cambridge University Botanic Garden

BEST FOR UNUSUAL PLANTS First opened to the public in 1846, this 40-acre heritage-listed garden boasts over 8,000 different plant species, including an excellent arboretum and nine National Collections. Tranquil and inspiring, the garden is worth visiting at any time of year, and now in particular as the Winter Garden is designed to showcase the remarkable array of plants with interesting bark, foliage, stem colour, flowers and fragrance.

ADDRESS Botanic Garden, 1 Brookside, Cambridge CB2 1JE
TEL 01223 336265 WEB www.botanic.cam.ac.uk

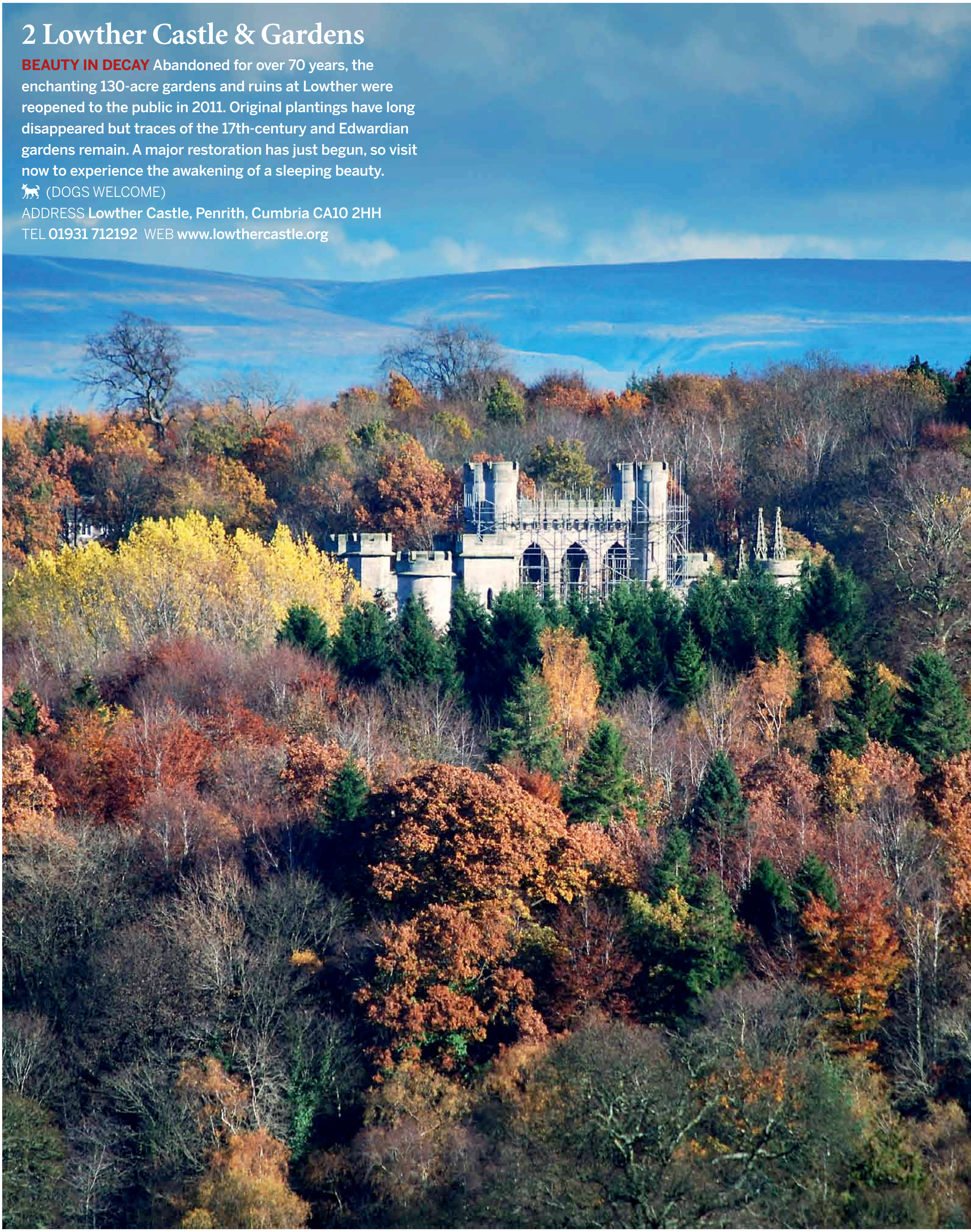
HOWARD RICE / GAP PHOTOS.

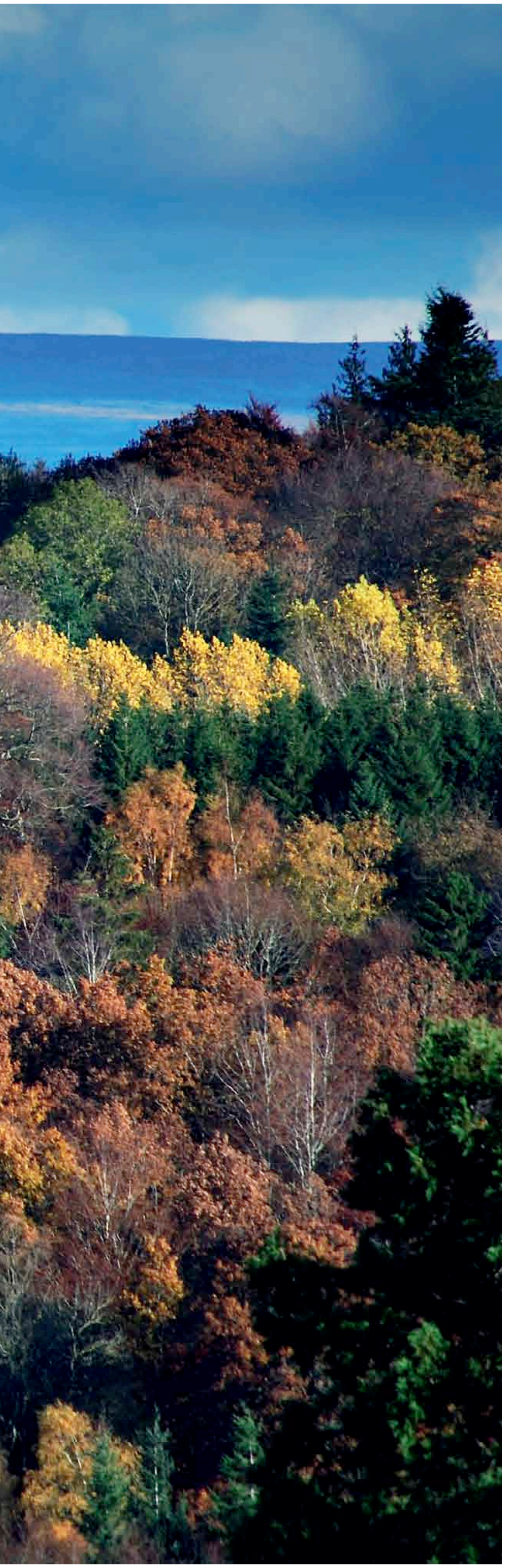
2 Lowther Castle & Gardens

BEAUTY IN DECAY Abandoned for over 70 years, the enchanting 130-acre gardens and ruins at Lowther were reopened to the public in 2011. Original plantings have long disappeared but traces of the 17th-century and Edwardian gardens remain. A major restoration has just begun, so visit now to experience the awakening of a sleeping beauty.

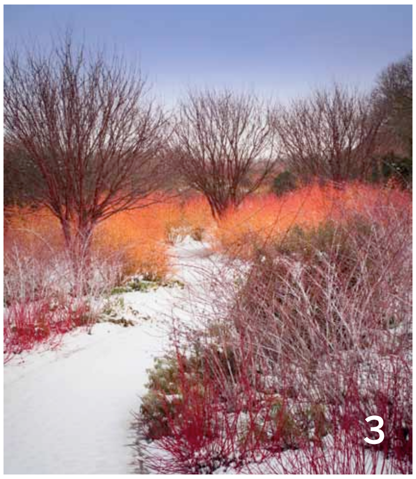
🐕 (DOGS WELCOME)

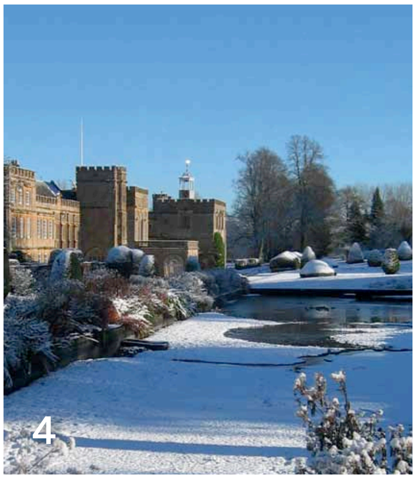
ADDRESS **Lowther Castle, Penrith, Cumbria CA10 2HH**
TEL **01931 712192** WEB **www.lowthercastle.org**

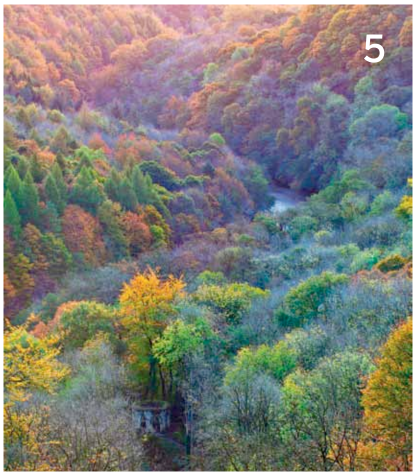


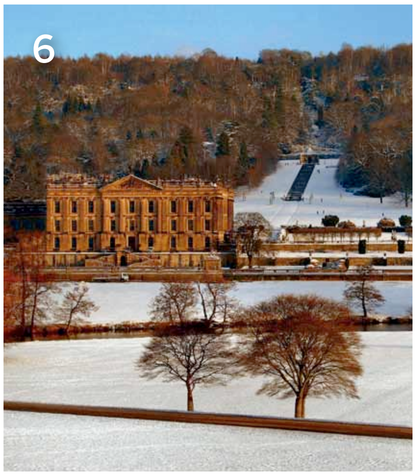


2 ROB WHARTON, 3 RICHARD BLOOM / GAP PHOTOS, 4 FORDE ABBEY, ALICE KENNARD, 5 DARRYL GILL / ALAMY, 6 KEVIN TEBBUTT.









3 Anglesey Abbey

COLOURFUL PLANTING This influential Winter Garden has a network of paths that draw visitors through colourful planting schemes, which include silver birch scrubbed to a sparking white. This year the new Winter Lights Festival will allow visitors to see the garden illuminated with colour. ADDRESS Quy Road, Lode, Cambridge CB25 9EJ TEL 01223 810080 WEB www.nationaltrust.org.uk/anglesey-abbey

4 Forde Abbey

This 12th-century monastery is surrounded by 30 acres of gardens. Alongside interesting architectural elements, there are lakes, an arboretum, bog and kitchen garden. A new Winter Garden is being developed. 🐕 ADDRESS Forde Abbey, Chard, Somerset TA20 4LU TEL 01460 220231 WEB www.fordeabbey-gardens-dorset.co.uk

5 Hackfall

LANDSCAPED WILDERNESS The 120-acre woodlands at first appear wild and untamed, yet waterfalls, follies and a fountain reveal that this is a landscape shaped by man. Hackfall fell into decline in the 1930s, but recent restorations mean visitors can once more explore this stunning landscape. 🐕 ADDRESS Near Grewelthorpe, North Yorkshire HG 4 3DE WEB www.hackfall.org.uk

6 Chatsworth

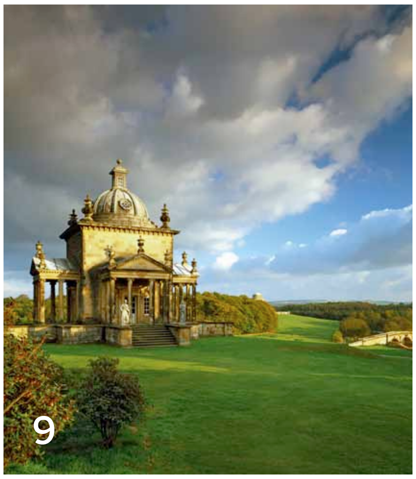
Landscaped by Capability Brown and planted by Joseph Paxton, Chatsworth has a fine heritage. With a magnificent 300-year old cascade, dramatic fountains, lake and maze, the fine underlying structure of Chatsworth's 105-acre garden comes to the fore in winter. 🐕 ADDRESS Chatsworth, Bakewell, Derbyshire DE45 1PP TEL 01246 565300 WEB www.chatsworth.org

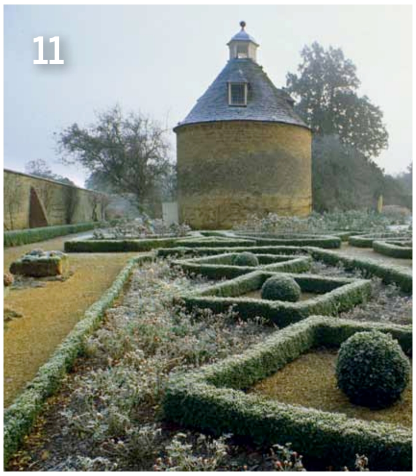
7 Yorkshire Sculpture Park

LANDSCAPE COMPLEMENTED BY SCULPTURE

Set in 500 acres, the Yorkshire Sculpture Park uses the beautiful 18th-century parkland of the Bretton Estate with its scenic vistas, historic woodland and wide open spaces to showcase a thoughtful selection of international modern and contemporary sculpture. Artists represented include Henry Moore (pictured), Antony Gormley, Barbara Hepworth, James Turrell and Andy Goldsworthy. Wonderful walks and fantastic views with artwork that delights, inspires and informs. 🐕 ADDRESS West Bretton, Wakefield, West Yorkshire WF4 4LG TEL 01924 832631 WEB www.ysp.co.uk

7 RICK HARRISON. 8 JOHN GLOVER / GAP PHOTOS. 9 JOE CORNISH / GETTY IMAGES. 10 CEPHAS PICTURE LIBRARY / ALAMY. 11 MARIANNE MAJERUS.





8 Harlow Carr

PLANTING IDEAS TO STEAL The Winter Walk at RHS Harlow Carr has been designed to inspire visitors with a clever plant selection rich in colour, form and texture. Do visit Betty's tea room. ADDRESS RHS Garden Harlow Carr, Crag Lane, Harrogate, North Yorkshire HG3 1QB TEL 0845 265 8070 WEB www.rhs.org.uk/gardens/harlow-carr

9 Castle Howard

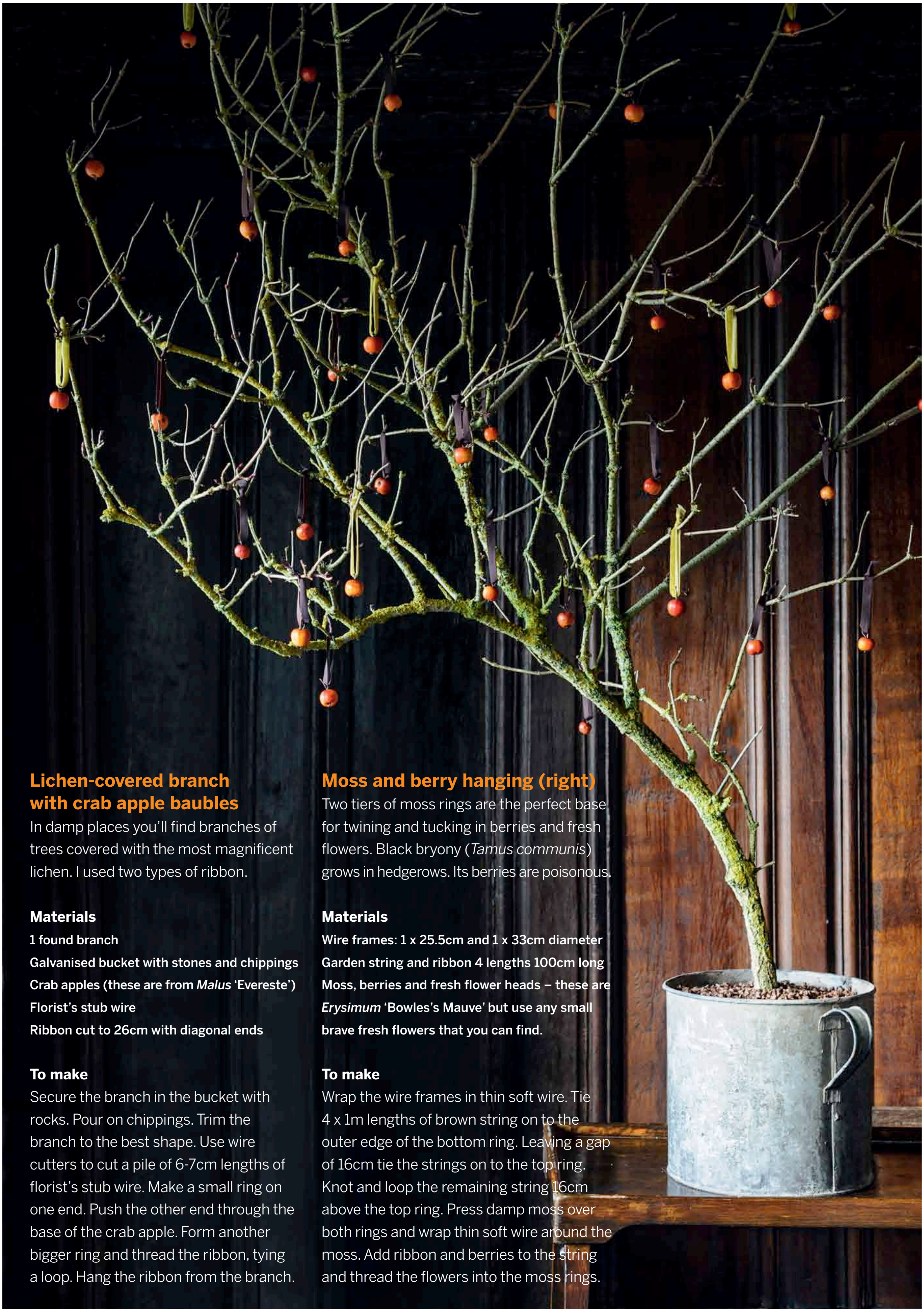
Castle Howard's magnificent 18th-century house is set in 1,000 acres of landscaped park. It's worth taking time to enjoy the extensive walks through formal gardens, woodlands and monumental parkland punctuated with temples, follies, statuary, lakes and fountains. 🐕 ADDRESS Castle Howard, York, North Yorkshire YO60 7DA TEL 01653 648333 WEB www.castlehoward.co.uk

10 Painshill

HISTORIC LANDSCAPE PARK Inspired by its owner's Grand Tours, Painshill's 18th-century landscape park is one of the most important in Europe. Features include a Gothic Temple, Hermitage, 14-acre lake, giant water wheel and working vineyard. 🐕 ADDRESS Painshill Park, Portsmouth Road, Cobham, Surrey KT11 1JE TEL 01932 868113 WEB www.painshill.co.uk

11 Rousham

ROMANTIC ENGLISH LANDSCAPE A place of pilgrimage for garden designers and historians alike, Rousham's magical 18th-century landscape garden is the unspoilt masterpiece of William Kent (1685-1748). Visitors are drawn past classical temples, formal ponds, glades, serpentine rill and exquisite statuary. ADDRESS Steeple Aston, Bicester, Oxfordshire OX25 4QU TEL 01869 347110 WEB www.rousham.org



Lichen-covered branch with crab apple baubles

In damp places you'll find branches of trees covered with the most magnificent lichen. I used two types of ribbon.

Materials

1 found branch
Galvanised bucket with stones and chippings
Crab apples (these are from *Malus* 'Evereste')
Florist's stub wire
Ribbon cut to 26cm with diagonal ends

To make

Secure the branch in the bucket with rocks. Pour on chippings. Trim the branch to the best shape. Use wire cutters to cut a pile of 6-7cm lengths of florist's stub wire. Make a small ring on one end. Push the other end through the base of the crab apple. Form another bigger ring and thread the ribbon, tying a loop. Hang the ribbon from the branch.

Moss and berry hanging (right)

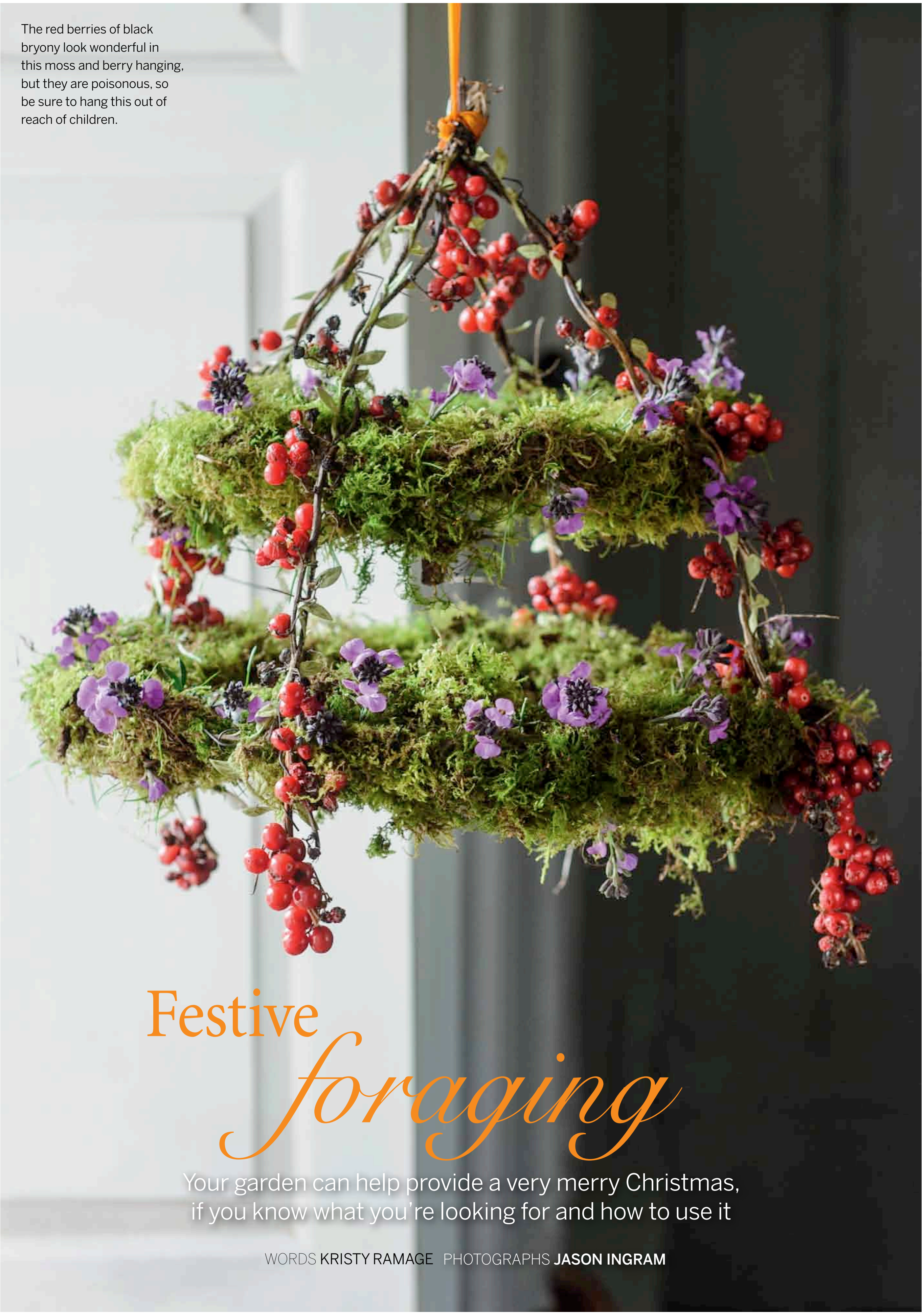
Two tiers of moss rings are the perfect base for twining and tucking in berries and fresh flowers. Black bryony (*Tamus communis*) grows in hedgerows. Its berries are poisonous.

Materials

Wire frames: 1 x 25.5cm and 1 x 33cm diameter
Garden string and ribbon 4 lengths 100cm long
Moss, berries and fresh flower heads – these are *Erysimum* 'Bowles's Mauve' but use any small brave fresh flowers that you can find.

To make

Wrap the wire frames in thin soft wire. Tie 4 x 1m lengths of brown string on to the outer edge of the bottom ring. Leaving a gap of 16cm tie the strings on to the top ring. Knot and loop the remaining string 16cm above the top ring. Press damp moss over both rings and wrap thin soft wire around the moss. Add ribbon and berries to the string and thread the flowers into the moss rings.

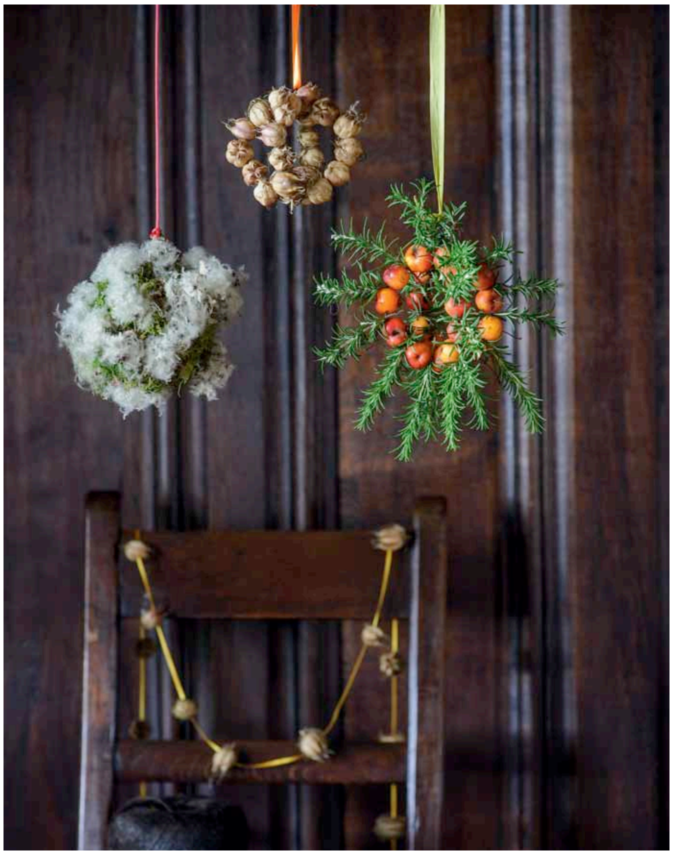


The red berries of black bryony look wonderful in this moss and berry hanging, but they are poisonous, so be sure to hang this out of reach of children.

Festive *foraging*

Your garden can help provide a very merry Christmas, if you know what you're looking for and how to use it

WORDS **KRISTY RAMAGE** PHOTOGRAPHS **JASON INGRAM**



Garden baubles and seed-head garlands

These baubles are all really simple to make, and are very effective hanging from a mantelpiece or shelf.

Materials (from left to right)

Bauble 1 **Moss and old man's beard on chicken wire**
Bauble 2 ***Nigella* seed heads on wire (360mm x 1.2mm)**
Bauble 3 **Crab apple and rosemary on wire (360mm x 1.2mm)**
Garland (on back of chair) ***Nigella* seed heads on ribbon**

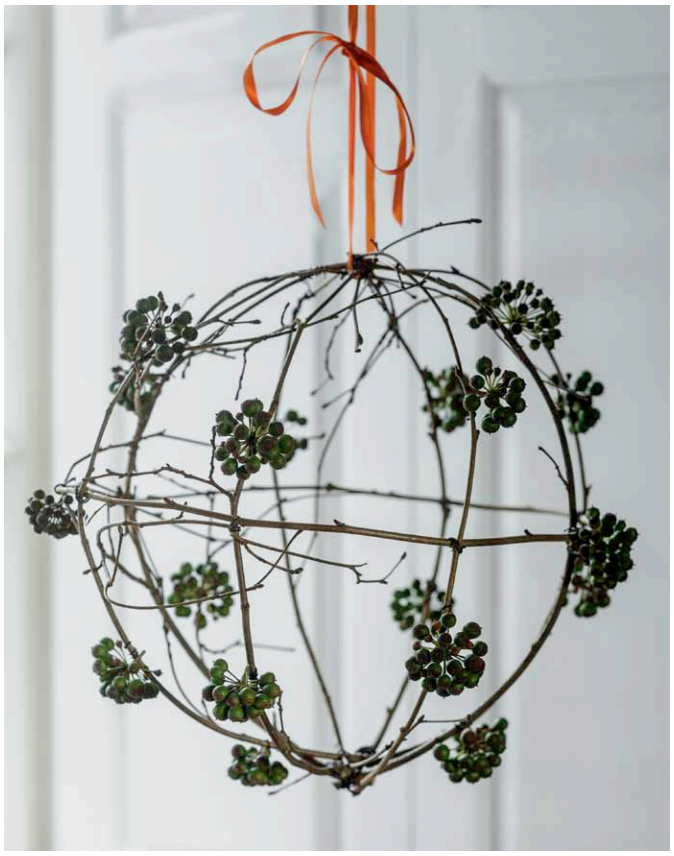
To make

Bauble 1 Cut chicken wire to 12cm x 20cm and form a cylinder. Crush the top and bottom inwards to form a ball of about 8cm diameter. Using pliers pull out and twist a loop for a ribbon. Cover with damp moss. Secure with florist's stub wire bent like hair pins. Secure the stems of the seed heads into the moss with wire.

Bauble 2 Take two 36cm pieces of stub wire and wrap them around a jar to form two rings. Thread the *Nigella* on to one, then thread the second ring through the bottom seed head at 90 degrees. Add seed heads either side of the fixed bottom one and twist the ends of the wire together to make a loop for the ribbon.

Bauble 3 Make as bauble 2 but thread with alternating crab apples and rosemary, having first pierced them with an awl or compass point.

Garland Thread the ribbon on a bodkin or tapestry needle. Put a small hole through the centre of each of the seed heads first, then pass the threaded needle through. Arrange them along the length of the ribbon. If they slip, loop the ribbon around each seed head.



Hazel ball with ivy berries

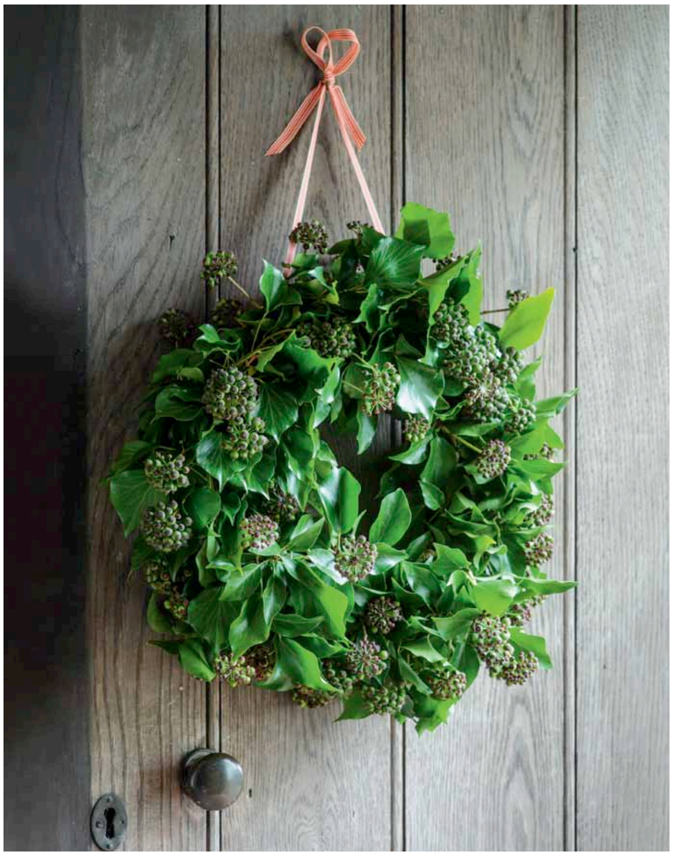
Old tree stumps and gateposts are the perfect place to find mature ivy with clusters of fantastically architectural berries. To show them off to their best advantage they need a structure, so here I used the thin ends of hazel branches to make a ball that is light enough to hang from a pin. A collection of these globes in varying sizes look great hanging from the ceiling – or hang just one to catch the light from a window.

Materials

9 thin pliable hazel (or willow) branches approx 100cm long, with the twiggy ends left on
20 or so ivy berry heads
Florist's stub wire cut into 7-10cm lengths
Ribbon for hanging

To make

Form nine rings about 26cm in diameter from the lengths of hazel, overlapping the ends and leaving the twiggy ends sticking out. Put eight rings together to form a segmented ball, and fix at the top and bottom with florist's wire. Put the ninth ring horizontally around the ball and fix to the vertical rings with florist's wire. Weave the twiggy ends of the hazel into the ball shape – cut off any extra bits that you don't want. Wind a cut piece of florist's wire around the stem of each ivy berry head, leaving a 3cm end to fix to the hazel ball, then randomly attach them and pinch the wire tight with pliers. (Note: ivy berries are moderately toxic.)



A wreath of berried ivy

A simple wreath packed with just one plant material is often more striking than a mixture of colours and texture. The shiny leaves and dark purple and green berries of mature common ivy are so fulsome that they need absolutely nothing else.

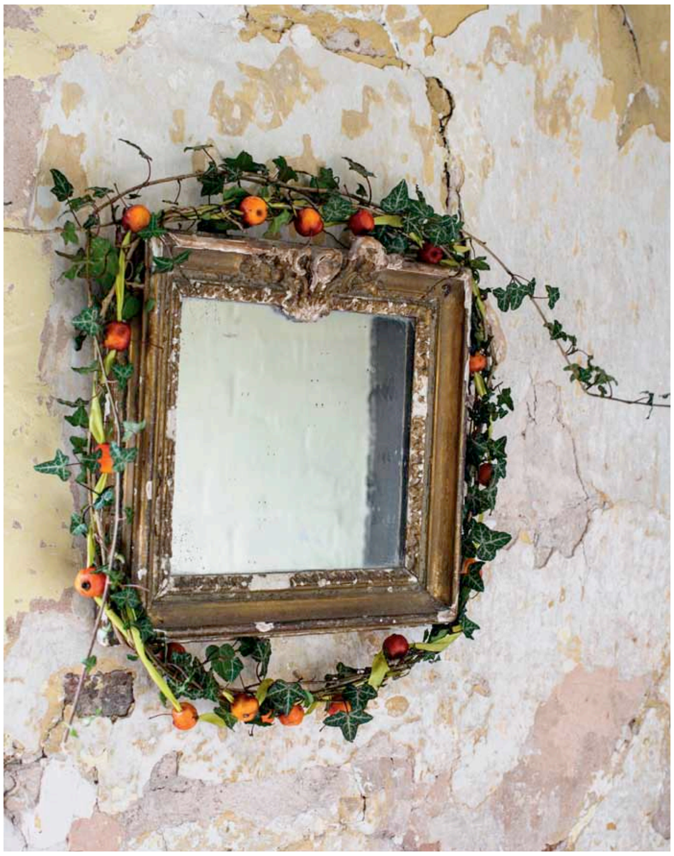
Materials

Wire wreath frame (this one is 33cm in diameter) or galvanised wire to make your own.
Reel of soft wire
Lengths (20-30cm) of ivy leaves and berries
Ribbon for hanging

To make

Wrap the soft wire around the wreath frame and thread the stems of the ivy pieces into the wire, layering the pieces on top of one another and moving around the circle. Put plenty on – it should feel abundant – and secure with extra wire if needed. The berries should naturally disperse around the wreath, and you can always add more by wiring the stem of individual berry bunches and threading them in between the leaves.

Flowering (and therefore berried) branches of ivy are not lobed and trailing, but self-supporting and robust, usually found growing in the sun. So it's strong, and of course ivy brings good luck and keeps the devil out. This makes it just right to hang on the front door.



Trailing ivy and crab apple garland

This simple garland can decorate a painting or mirror, or form a ring on the Christmas table, hung festoon-like over the top edge of a cupboard, or twisted around the banisters of a staircase.

Materials

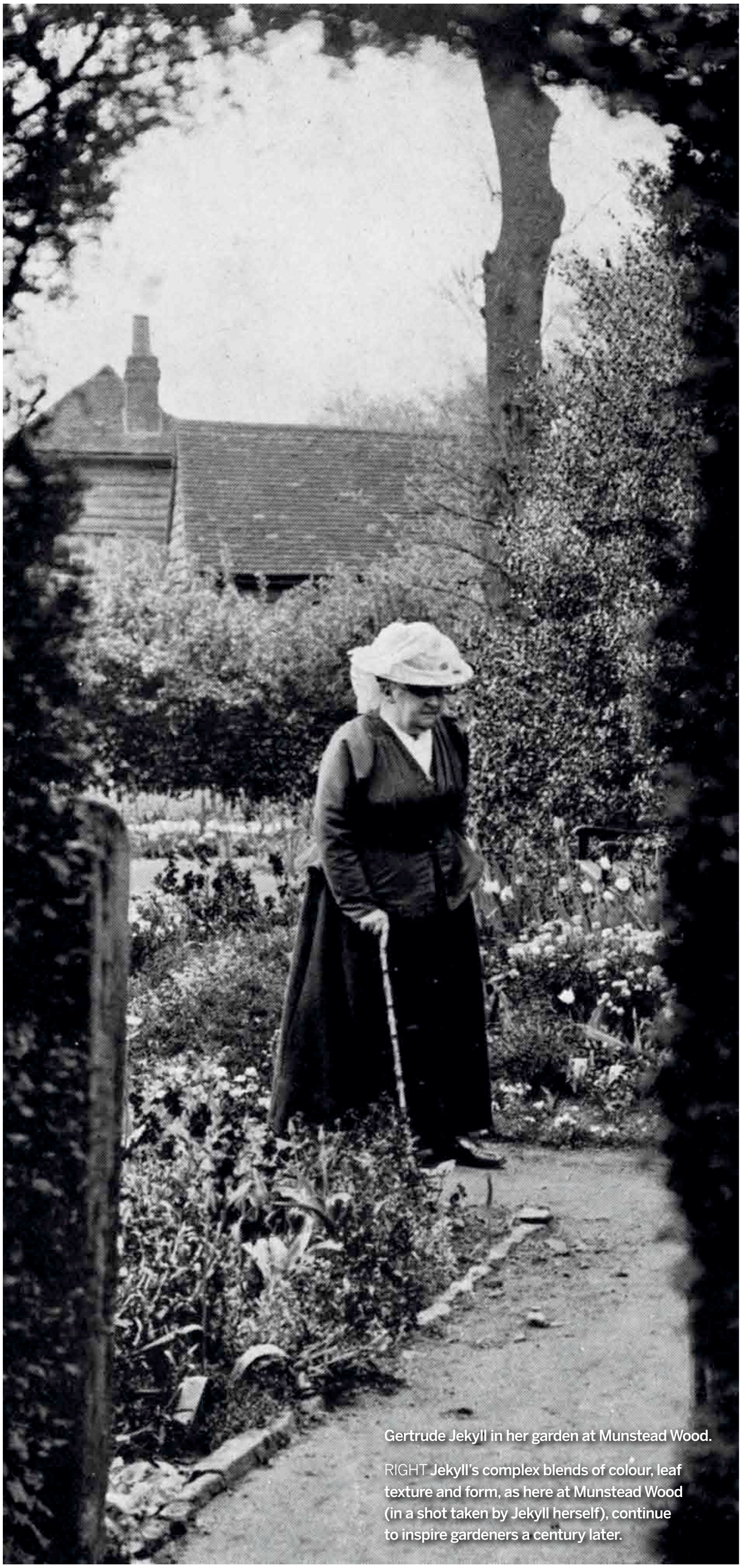
Lengths of marbled trailing ivy
Crab apples
Ribbon
Black cotton thread

To make

First thread the crab apples on to the ribbon using a needle with a large eye. Pierce the crab apples first if they are very hard. They should stay in position on the ribbon. Fix the end of the ribbon and two strands of trailing ivy together by binding them tightly with black cotton and tying off. Hook the end on something stable while you loosely plait the ivy and ribbon together. Add more trailing ivy as it thins out and keep it loose enough to curl around a picture frame. Leave some tendrils to escape at the side.

SUPPLIERS

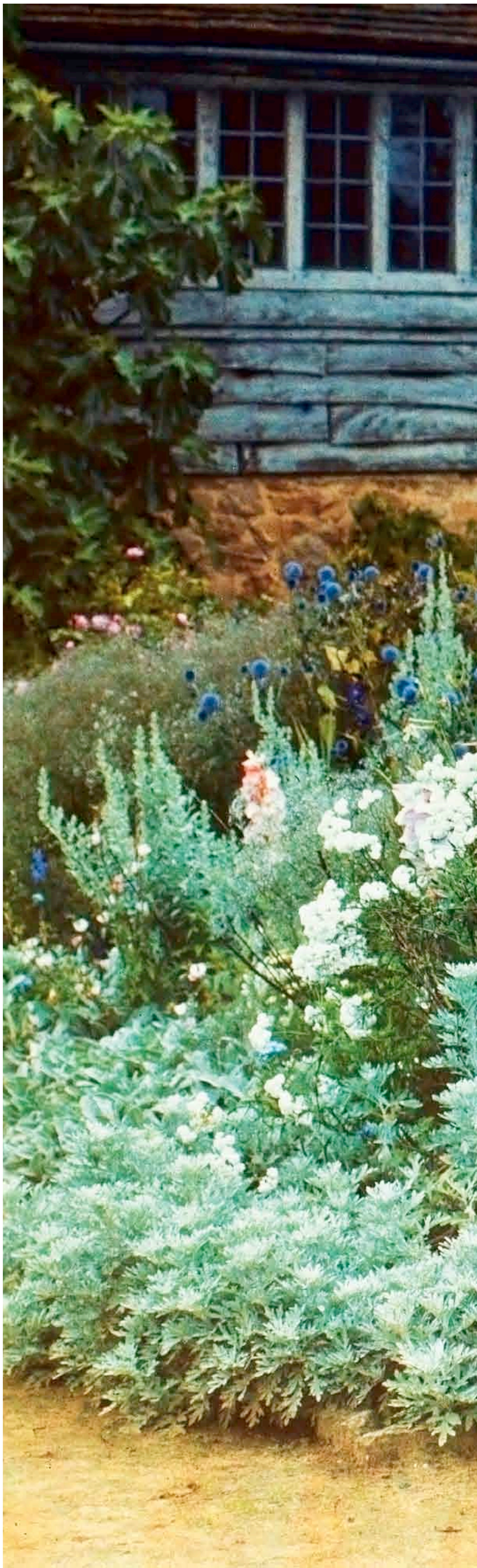
Ribbons: www.vvrouleaux.com – or look out for bulk quantities at antique markets.
Florists wire, wreath frames and long nosed pliers, www.essentialscompany.co.uk or www.qualityfloristsupplies.co.uk for stub wire at 360mm x 1.2mm.



Gertrude Jekyll in her garden at Munstead Wood.

RIGHT Jekyll's complex blends of colour, leaf texture and form, as here at Munstead Wood (in a shot taken by Jekyll herself), continue to inspire gardeners a century later.

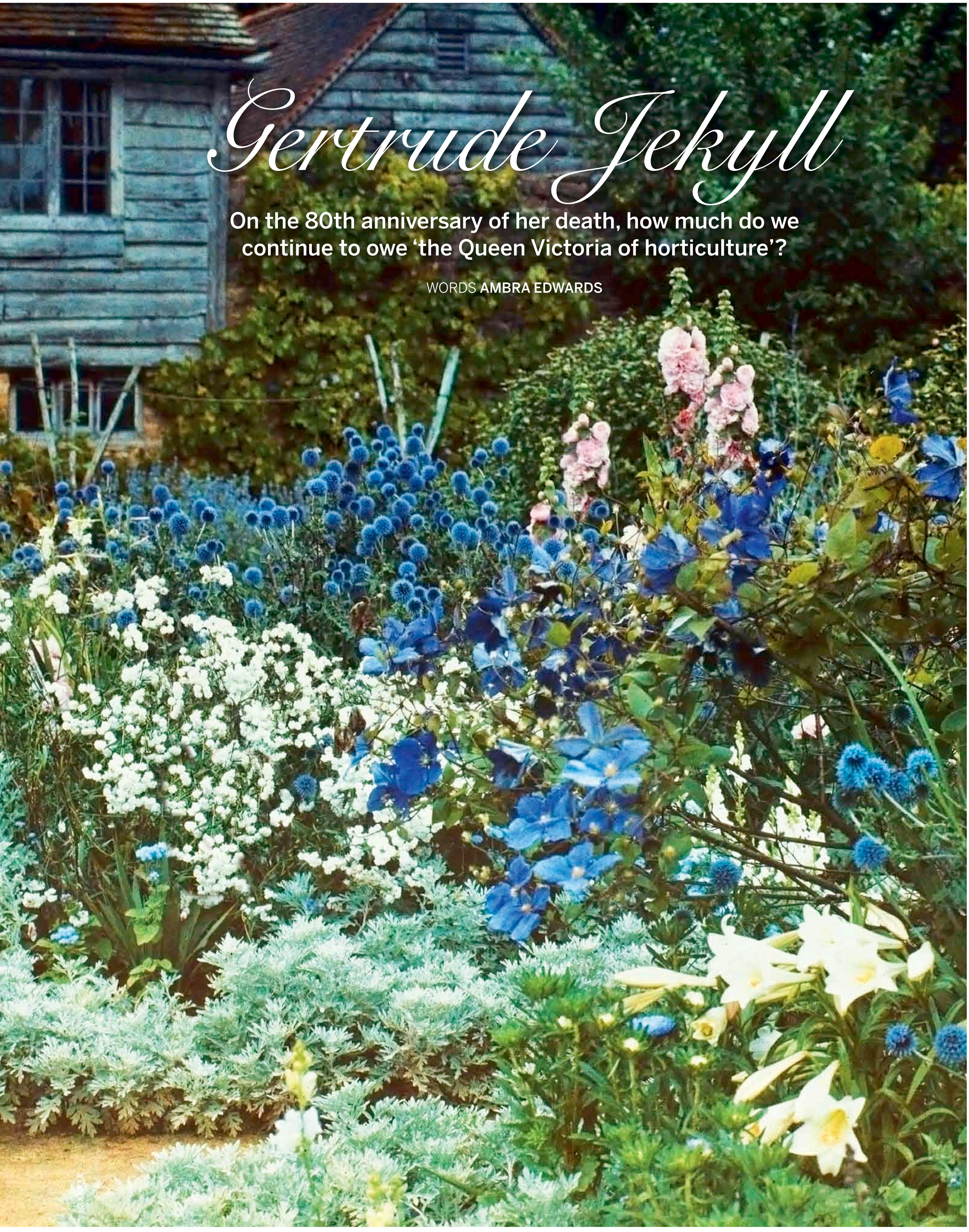
LEFT: COUNTRY LIFE / IPC MEDIA / GARDEN WORLD IMAGES. RIGHT: GERTRUDE JEKYLL / COUNTRY LIFE PICTURE LIBRARY.



Gertrude Jekyll

On the 80th anniversary of her death, how much do we continue to owe 'the Queen Victoria of horticulture'?

WORDS **AMBRA EDWARDS**



Gertrude timeline

1843 Born in London, 29 November.

1861-63 Studies at South Kensington School of Art, followed by travels in the Mediterranean.

1869 Meets William Morris and becomes a devotee of the Arts and Crafts movement.

1881 Jekyll's first articles appear in William Robinson's *The Garden* magazine. Asked to advise on Oaklands (now RHS Wisley).

1882 Buys 15 acres of heath and woodland. Begins Munstead Wood.

1889 Over tea with her neighbour, Henry Mangles, meets a young architect, Edwin Lutyens.

1891 Advised by a leading oculist to give up painting and embroidery. She helps Lutyens with his first commission; he begins work on a garden retreat for her.

COLOUR IN THE
FLOWER GARDEN
GERTRUDE JEKYLL

1897 Moves into new Lutyens house at Munstead Wood.

1899 Publishes her first book, aged 56 – *Wood and Garden*, followed a year later by *Home and Garden*. More follow including the seminal *Colour in the Flower Garden* and *Gardens for Small Country Houses.*

1901-02 Creates influential Deanery garden for Edward Hudson.

1903 Jekyll and Lutyens begin work on Hestercombe, considered by many their masterwork.

1906-12 Works on Folly Farm, Berkshire.

1918-32 Jekyll continues to work on over 300 planting plans, rarely leaving Munstead as her sight deteriorates.

1932 Dies 8 December at Munstead Wood. Lutyens designs her memorial, inscribed ARTIST, GARDENER, CRAFTSWOMAN.

> *"Although it is 80 years this month since she died, her ideas about colour, harmony, rhythm; about the grouping of plants and the organisation of the garden continue to underpin 21st-century thinking."*

Which gardener, more than any other, has had the most enduring influence on the British garden? For me, standing head and shoulders above the rest, is the paradoxically short, stout, bespectacled form of Gertrude Jekyll. Although it is 80 years this month since she died, her ideas about colour, harmony, rhythm; about the grouping of plants and the organisation of the garden (gradually relaxing into wildness as we move further from the house) continue to underpin 21st-century thinking. Only now are Jekyll's flowing drifts giving way to naturalistic matrices of planting. But balancing a satisfying formal structure with loose, richly textured planting, remains, for many of us, the goal we long to achieve.

The historian Catherine Harwood has described her as 'the Queen Victoria of horticulture,' yet Jekyll was by no means a typical Victorian lady, being unusually well educated and well travelled; independent in both mind and means, and resolutely single. She was one of the first women in Britain to train as an art student, and became a highly accomplished textile artist, as well as painting, making furniture, pots and metalwork. Her study of the vernacular architecture of Surrey would inform not only her new home at Munstead Wood, but the gardens she would create with the architect she engaged, one Edwin Lutyens.

She met Lutyens over tea with a neighbouring rhododendron fancier (a common affliction in Victorian Surrey). On the face of it, it seems an unlikely friendship, between the untried young architect and this rather formidable middle-aged spinster. Famously, Jekyll came late to gardening, claiming to have turned to the soil only when her eyesight failed. 'When I was young I was hoping to be a painter, but to my lifelong regret I was obliged to abandon all hope of this... on account of my extreme and always progressive myopia.'

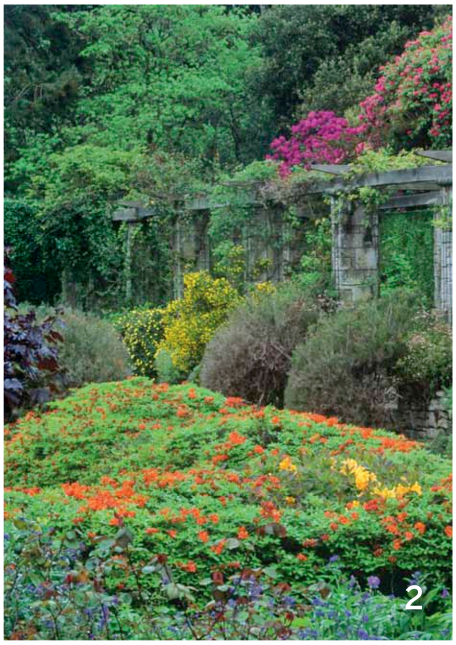
But being forced to look at things close-to fostered a minute exactness of observation, which was her gift (along with her enviable address book) to the young man. It was this fine appreciation not just of nuances of colour, but of texture and form, that made her so outstandingly successful at placing and combining plants in the border.

A fine romance

To Lutyens she became a kindly mentor, known affectionately as 'Aunt Bumps'. Together, they made over 100 gardens – less than a third of Jekyll's prodigious output, but justly legendary. They created complex, romantic spaces we still admire today.

When Lutyens and Jekyll began their collaboration, the gardening world was in a state of war. On one side stood Jekyll's old friend William Robinson, champion of the wild garden, impassioned enemy of all things clipped, terraced and formal. On the other stood John Sedding and Reginald Blomfield, who held that a garden should be an extension of the house, governed by principles of architecture rather than horticulture. A bitter war of words continued throughout the 1890s, forcing the combatants into extreme positions somewhat removed from their actual gardening practice. Jekyll was vastly amused to discover that Robinson's garden at Gravetye contained an area 'all in squares' while Blomfield had a garden on a cliff 'with ne'er a straight line in it'. ▷

BOOK: JOHN HAMMOND / NATIONAL TRUST IMAGES. BOOTS: HOWARD SOOLEY



1 The great pergola at Hestercombe, in Somerset, planted with Jekyll favourites.

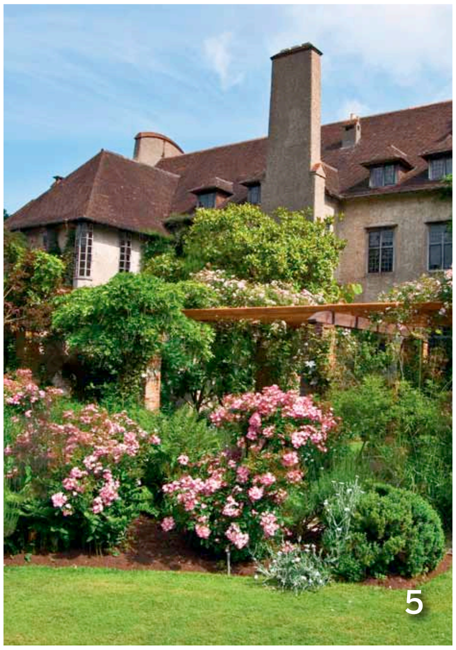
2 Although by the 1920s Jekyll rarely left Munstead Wood, she prepared plans for new plantings at Mount Stewart in Northern Ireland.

3 When Lutyens built a modern castle, from scratch, on a Devon hillside (Castle Drogo, designed in 1911) he recommended that Jekyll design the garden.

4 *Rosa* Gertrude Jekyll = 'Ausbord' is strongly fragrant, with deep pink flowers that open into a flat rosette.

5 Le Bois des Moutiers is the only garden to be made by Lutyens and Jekyll in France, and one of their earliest collaborations.

6 The walled garden at Lindisfarne Castle (planted in 1911) tested Jekyll's skills as a plantswoman, with its exposed island position off the Northumberland coast.



1 HESTERCOMBE GARDENS / JASON INGRAM. 2 JERRY HARPUR / NATIONAL TRUST IMAGES. 3 ANDREW BUTLER / NATIONAL TRUST IMAGES. 4 LEIGH CLAPP / GAP PHOTOS. 5 GARFOTOS / ALAMY. 6 VAL CORBETT / COUNTRY LIFE PICTURE LIBRARY

The borders at Upton Grey have been recreated using Jekyll's original planting plans.

▷ Into this stormy sea floated the serene gardens of Jekyll and Lutyens, a sublime synthesis in which the loose, informal planting beloved of Robinson was displayed within a tight geometric framework. An understanding of the possibilities of plants and respect for place combined in gardens many believe have never been surpassed.

Perhaps Jekyll's greatest insight was how our perceptions, and indeed our emotions, can be manipulated by juxtapositions of colour. As a student, she had spent long hours copying Turners, and it is thought that his painting *The Fighting Temeraire* may have suggested the colour sequence for her great border at Munstead Wood. Certainly there are tricks here that Jekyll copied: yellow fading to white to create an aerial quality, while purples, silvers and blues are used to suggest distance. Writing about this border in *Colour in the Flower Garden* (available today as *Colour Schemes for the Flower Garden*), she describes how one colour flows into another, from cool to hot and back again. She notes how the border works as a whole, but also how each portion 'becomes a picture in itself' and stimulates an appetite for the colours which follow.

She taught us to look at the garden in a painterly way: 'I am strongly of the opinion that the possession of a quantity of plants, however good the plants may be themselves and however ample their number, does not make a garden; it only makes a collection.' She thought of her plants as 'paints set out upon a palette', and our job as gardeners 'so to use the plants that they shall form beautiful pictures'.

While believing that gardening 'may rightly claim to rank as a fine art', her approach was unwaveringly practical: she made her living by selling plants to her clients, and never recommended any plant or idea she had not first tried out herself. She drew no distinction between fine art and craft. 'To plant and maintain a flower border, with a good scheme for colour,' she writes, 'is by no means the easy thing that is commonly supposed.' The 'maintain' is important: it is typical of Jekyll that she acknowledges the craft and the graft.

Her joy was to be in 'closest acquaintance and sympathy with the growing things'; her aim, to make of the garden 'a place of perfect rest and refreshment of mind and body.'

Here, surely, is a vision of gardening that will never go out of fashion. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Jekyll gardens to visit

Barrington Court, Somerset – beautifully maintained Jekyll planting.
WEBSITE www.nationaltrust.org.uk

Castle Drogo, Devon – castle built by Lutyens with Jekyll garden.
WEBSITE www.nationaltrust.org.uk

Hestercombe, Somerset – the supreme Lutyens and Jekyll garden.
OPEN daily except Christmas Day
WEBSITE www.hestercombe.com

Upton Grey Manor House, Hampshire – garden meticulously restored to Jekyll plans.
OPEN by appointment
WEBSITE www.gertrudejekyllgarden.co.uk

Jekyll plants

Claire Reid is head gardener at Hestercombe, and finds that Jekyll's plant choices have really stood the test of time. "She liked the same kind of plants as I do – hardy, functional plants that don't need too much TLC."

1 *Aster amellus* 'King George'
Asters are Claire's favourite plants, especially this reliable, bushy variety. Jekyll was also a fan, pairing them with richly coloured dahlias to extend the season.

2 *Bergenia cordifolia*
Jekyll valued elephant's ears for their large, leathery, oval, evergreen leaves, and used them extensively for edging.

3 *Erigeron karvinskianus*
This dainty self-seeding daisy is the signature plant at Hestercombe. It flowers from June to October, in sun and shade.

4 *Lavandula angustifolia* 'Munstead'
Jekyll liked to edge paths and underplant pergolas with lavender, and this sturdy variety is named after her Surrey garden.

5 *Rosa* 'The Garland'
This lovely old hybrid musk rambler was a favourite of Jekyll's, for its abundant sprays of creamy flowers, and its scent.

6 *Rosmarinus officinalis* 'Miss Jessopp's Upright'
Jekyll adored the fragrant shrubs and herbs she met on her Mediterranean travels, found they grew well on her thin sandy soil, and used them extensively.

7 *Stachys byzantina*
One of the first to use silver leaves in her gardens, Jekyll would often chop off the flower spikes, to retain the rounded character of the clumps of felty leaves.

8 *Yucca filamentosa*
Although such a spiky plant seems at odds with Jekyll's predominantly cottage garden aesthetic, she valued it highly for its year-round architectural form.

9 *Pulmonaria angustifolia* 'Munstead Blue'
Jekyll was a pioneer of the woodland garden no less than the herbaceous border, popularising beautiful shade-lovers such as this late-flowering beauty.

ABIGAIL REX / GAP PHOTOS

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1 LEONIE LAMBERT / GARDENWORLDIMAGES.COM. 2 DAVE BEVAN / GAP PHOTOS. 3 NICK JOHNSON / GARDENWORLDIMAGES.COM. 4 CHARLES HAWES / GAP PHOTOS.
5 CHRISTA BRAND / GAP PHOTOS. 6 RICHARD BLOOM / GAP PHOTOS. 7 TONY COOPER / GARDENWORLDIMAGES.COM. 8 RITA COATES / GARDENWORLDIMAGES.COM. 9 GEOFF KID / GAP PHOTOS.

In brief

WHAT A range of perennials and small shrubs providing interesting silver foliage.

SEASON Winter interest, but look good all year.

CONDITIONS Mostly full sun with good drainage; high drought tolerance.

Silver plants

There is a remarkable range of silver-leaved plants capable of bringing light into your garden even in the depths of winter

WORDS **NOËL KINGSBURY**

Frost brings an added sheen to the silvery leaves and arching stems of *Rubus thibetanus* 'Silver Fern' as part of the Winter Walk at Anglesey Abbey.

MARIANNE MAJERUS

Noël Kingsbury is an expert in planting design and a regular contributor to GARDENS ILLUSTRATED

On a dreary winter's day, silver foliage brings light into the garden. The range of plants with silver or grey foliage is wide, and even though many are deciduous, there are plenty that are reliably evergreen or that make early enough growth to be able to rely on them for winter colour.

Silver and grey foliage is usually the result of a coating of microscopic hairs on the leaf surface. These have evolved to reduce water loss from the leaf in dry or very sunny climates: they shade the surface of the leaf, reduce wind velocity at the surface, impede water loss and reflect sunlight. They may also make the leaf unattractive to predators, so if slugs, rabbits or deer are a problem – try planting with silvers.

Our reading of leaf colour can vary greatly. Some plants, such as common sage, *Salvia officinalis*, we interpret as grey, which does not do much to lift the garden on a dull winter's day, although on a sunny day it can make a valuable contribution. Silvers reflect more light, enough for us to read as bright in all weathers. They are particularly effective in contrast with green evergreens such box, bay or holly, or with colours – either painted garden features or precocious flowers. Some leaves we see as blue, which is often the result of a waxy coating to the leaf rather than hairs; the wax is also a defence against drought and strong sunlight.

The range of plant groups with silver foliage is so wide that clearly the adaptation has arisen many times in evolutionary history. Most of the silvers we grow are from Mediterranean climates where plants are exposed to many months of sunlight unfiltered by cloud, along with drying winds and dry soil. Of these most are what are known as 'sub-shrubs' – low-growing, twiggy, physically resilient plants; lavender is the best-known example, others being *Cistus*, *Ballota* and *Santolina*. They cover vast acreages in the Mediterranean region, and not ▷

▷ surprisingly, are the first plants to think about when planting hot dry banks with poor soil. Most are actually tolerant of 'ordinary' garden conditions, so long as there is full sunlight, which means that they can be used with lower-growing perennials and shrubs and bulbs, or in borders where annuals provide summer interest.

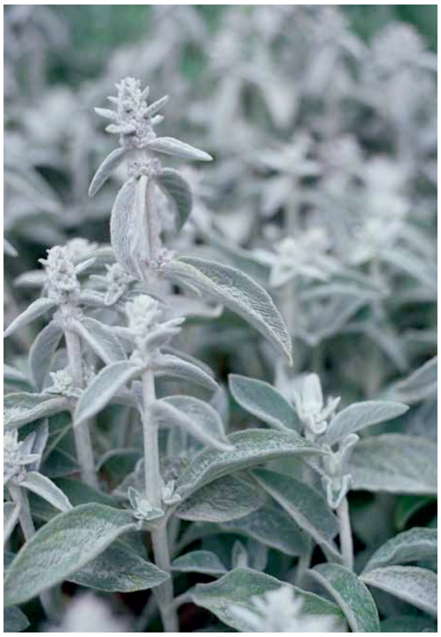
Some silvers are herbaceous perennials, dying back in autumn, but making very early winter growth. These are often plants of Mediterranean regions too; they are used to growing in cool moist winters, speeding up in spring, but are then very often dormant by July, so avoiding summer drought. *Cynara cardunculus*, which includes the globe artichoke and cardoon, makes a superlative mid-winter border plant, its cheerful jagged clumps of fresh young leaves often being the best-looking plant in the garden at this time. Similar in impact are the overwintering rosettes of hairy-leaved mulleins, such as *Verbascum bombyciferum*.

Grasses tend to be blue rather than silver, the colour the result of a coating rather than hair. In most cases, the blue colour has been enhanced through selective breeding – so named varieties tend to be better. Silver-blue grasses are always clump-formers, and so will not spread – the exception being species of *Leymus*; these are coastal plants, which spread through sand, whose leaves cope with sun, wind and salt. Indeed, silver foliage is a very good indication generally that a plant will flourish by the sea.

There are some silver oddities too. Some plants are grown for the white bloom on their bare winter stems; some species of *Rubus* for example have upright stems that catch low winter sunlight at the perfect angle – they can positively glow against a dark background.

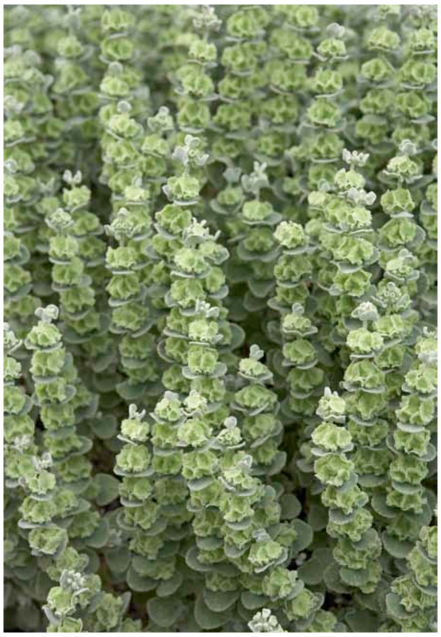
Whatever the scale of garden, there seem to be plenty of silvers to choose from. There should be no excuses for lifeless bare ground, and as the growing season starts up again, silvers can play a role in a variety of garden colour schemes. □

• Noël's pick of silver-leaved plants continues over the next six pages



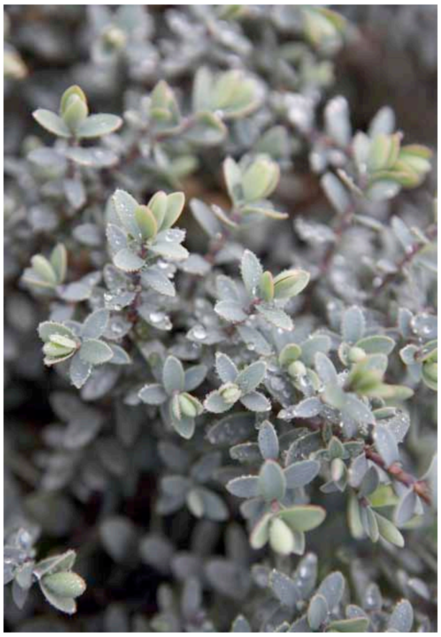
***STACHYS BYZANTINA* 'BIG EARS'**

A larger-leaved form of a very common border perennial, popular for its densely woolly leaves. With a spreading habit, it makes an effective ground cover, its appearance is spoiled only by untidy flower clusters in mid-summer. Sun and any well-drained soil. Late season mildew is an occasional temporary problem. Height 50cm Spread 60cm.



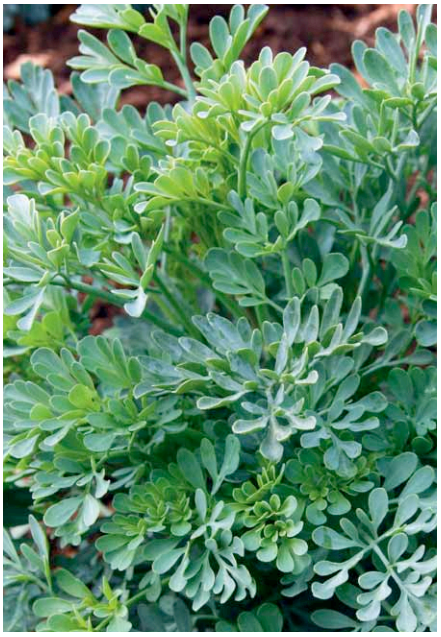
BALLOTA ACETABULOSA

A vigorously growing sub-shrub with masses of densely packed rounded leaves on profuse stems, both distinctly furry to the touch. Rather sprawling habit makes it a good filler on dry banks. Growth can be very rapid and floppy on fertile soils, and plants may benefit from hard pruning to tidy up. H 1.1m S 1m. AGM*



***HEBE PINGUIFOLIA* 'PAGEI'**

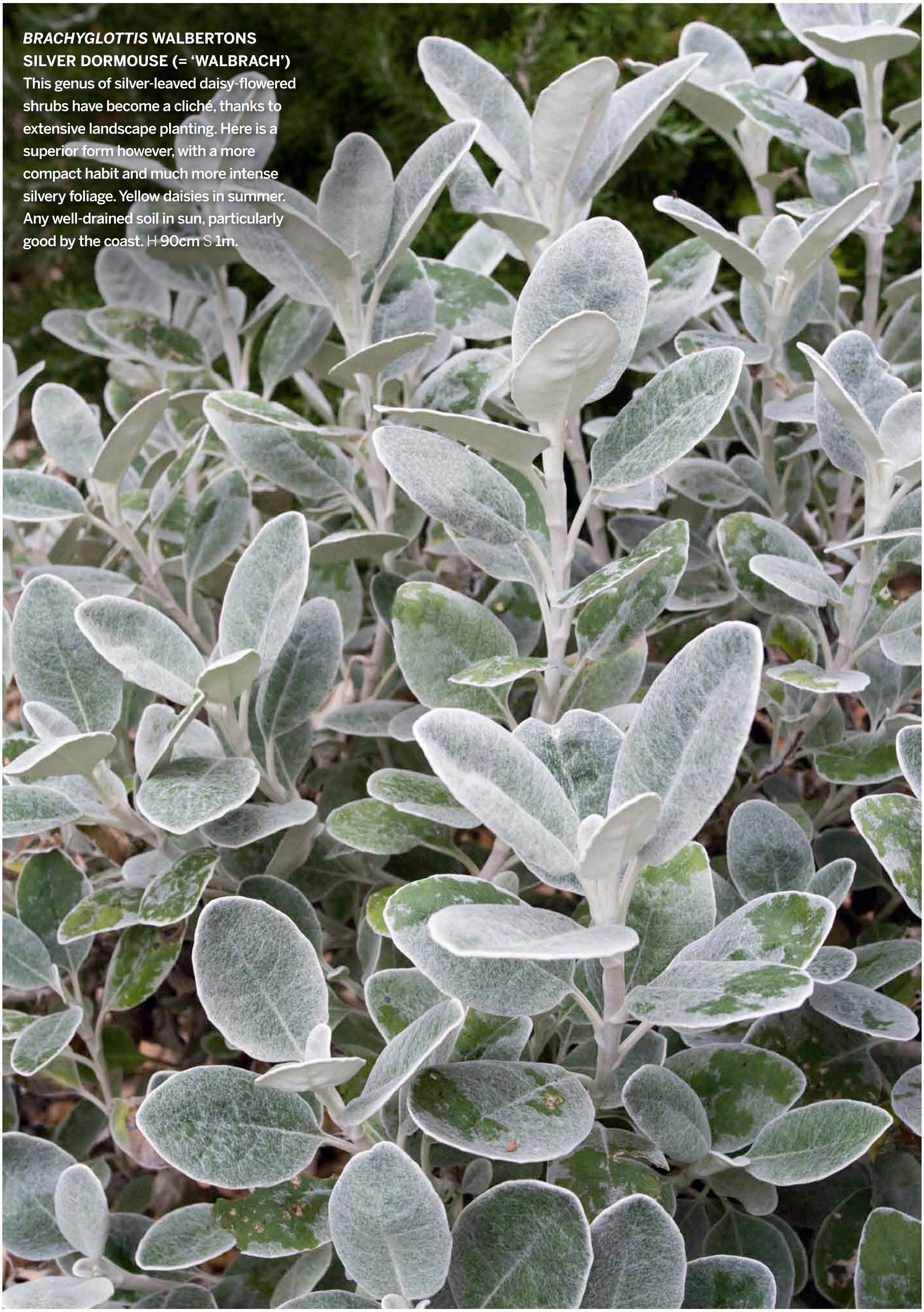
Densely packed small silver-grey leaves on a compact low-growing shrub makes a plant that stands out in all weathers. Small white flower clusters appear in early summer. Very effective with medium-sized grasses and heathers. Sun, any well-drained soil; not especially drought tolerant but good in windy or coastal gardens. H 50cm S 1m. AGM



***RUTA GRAVEOLENS* 'JACKMAN'S BLUE'**

A distinctly blue-leaved sub-shrub with dense growth and small divided leaves, giving it a finely textured look, an effective contrast with lighter coloured silvers, and a good background to early summer clusters of yellow flowers. Although it has been used in herbal medicine, it can upset sensitive skins. Sun, good drainage. H 60cm S 60cm.

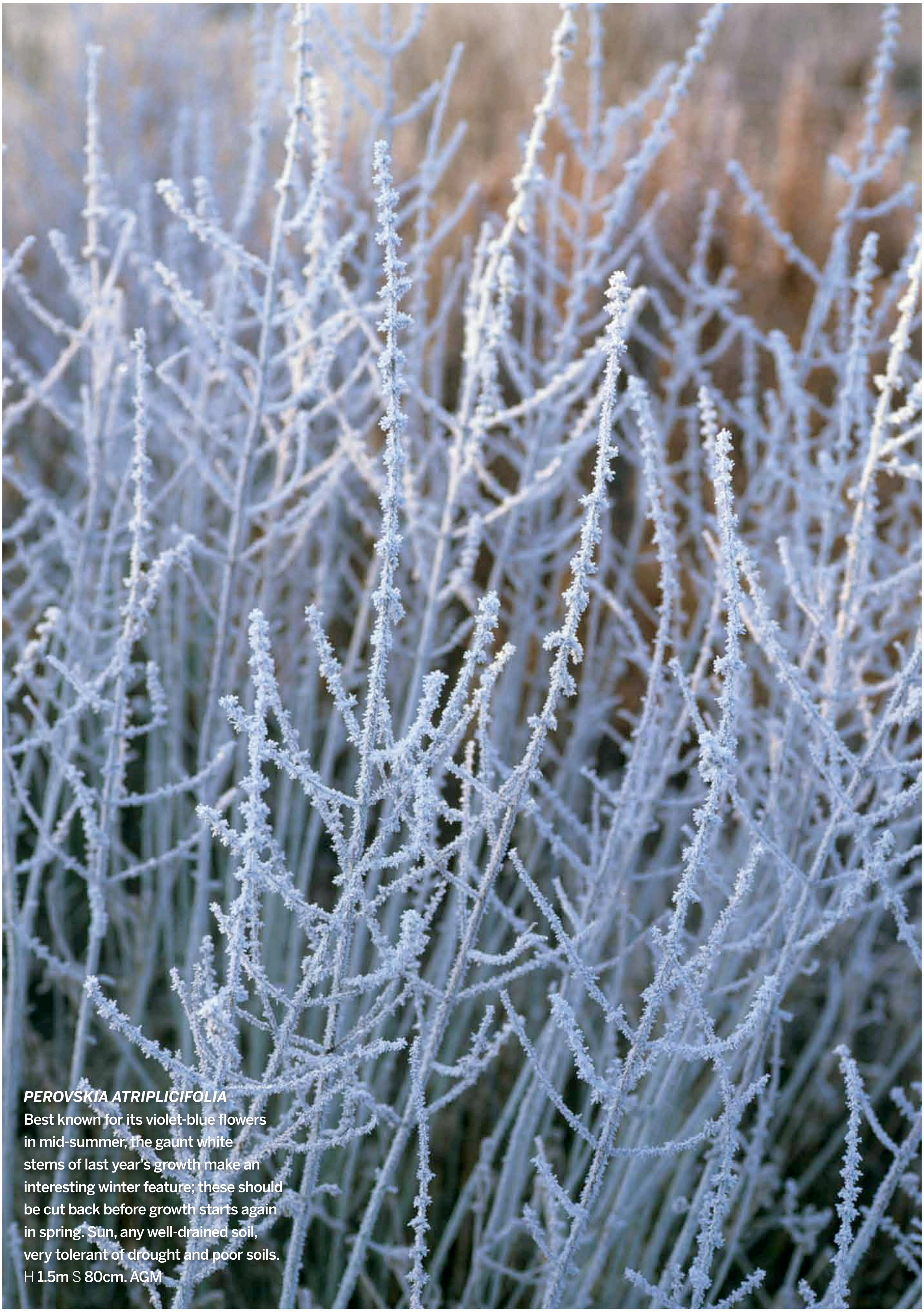
CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: HEATHER WESTON / BOTANICA / GETTY IMAGES; MATT ANKER / GAP PHOTOS; MATT ANKER / GAP PHOTOS; MARTIN HUGHES-JONES / GAP PHOTOS



***BRACHYGLOTTIS* WALBERTONS SILVER DORMOUSE (= 'WALBRACH')**
This genus of silver-leaved daisy-flowered shrubs have become a cliché, thanks to extensive landscape planting. Here is a superior form however, with a more compact habit and much more intense silvery foliage. Yellow daisies in summer. Any well-drained soil in sun, particularly good by the coast. H **90cm** S **1m.**

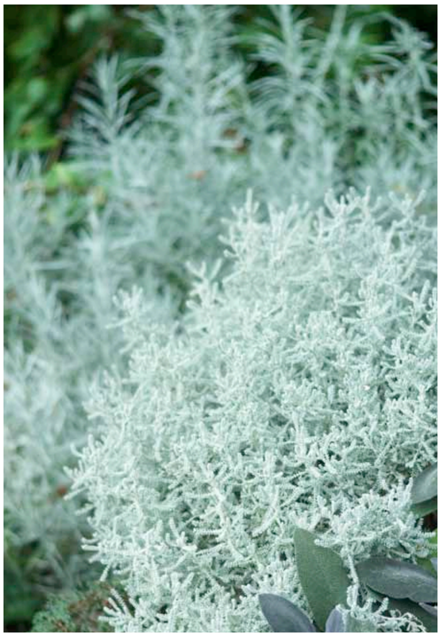
THOMAS ALAMY / GAP PHOTOS

*HOLDS AN AWARD OF GARDEN MERIT FROM THE ROYAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY.



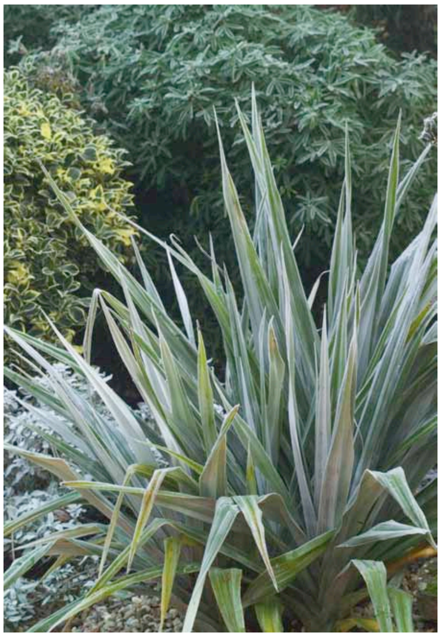
PEROVSKIA ATRIPLICIFOLIA
Best known for its violet-blue flowers in mid-summer, the gaunt white stems of last year's growth make an interesting winter feature; these should be cut back before growth starts again in spring. Sun, any well-drained soil, very tolerant of drought and poor soils. H 1.5m S 80cm. AGM

MARIANNE MAJERUS



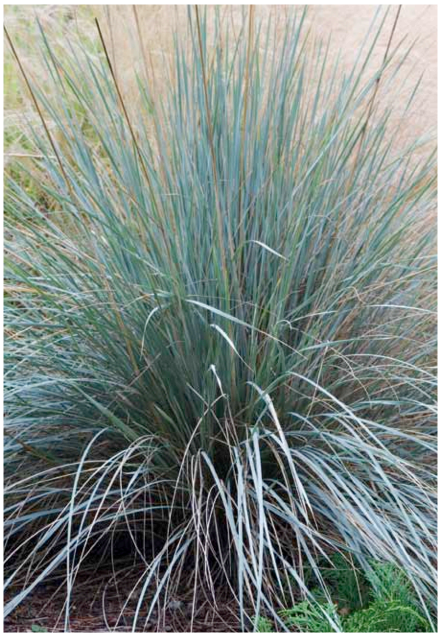
SANTOLINA PINNATA* SUBSP. *NEAPOLITANA

Probably the best all-round silver as it forms neat rounded hummocks of aromatic foliage, and unlike lavender it regenerates from hard pruning. Yellow button flowers on wiry stems in early to mid-summer. Sun, some tolerance of poorly drained soils. The silver colour is most enhanced on poor soils. H 60cm S 80cm. AGM



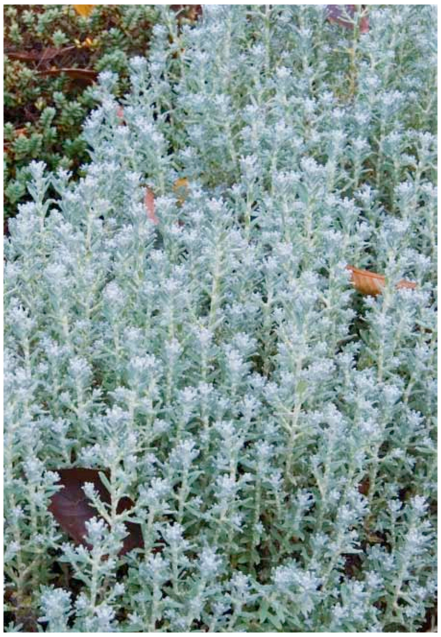
ASTELIA CHATHAMICA

Exotic-looking clumps of broad sword-shaped silver leaves make a dramatic spectacle. A very good focal point plant or companion to plants with rounded hummocky shapes. Occasional yellow flowers, Well-drained moist soil. Will cope with wind but not severe frost; a good coastal plant. H 1.2m S 1.2m. AGM



FESTUCA GLAUCA

A well-known 'blue' grass, with many named cultivars. It forms tight clumps so if used on any scale plants need to be closely spaced. Rather insignificant flowers. Very useful for small-scale and container plantings; combines well with dwarf bulbs and alpines. Full sun or very light shade, any well-drained soil; some drought tolerance. H 20cm S 20cm.



HELICHRYSUM SPLENDIDUM

A very silvery, densely-hairy sub-shrub with upward-thrusting stems smelling a little like poor quality curry. Golden-yellow flowers with a papery 'everlasting' quality to them appear in summer and last until autumn. Vigorous in sun and well-drained soils. Benefits from annual light pruning to overcome its tendency towards uneven growth. H 1m S 1m. AGM

HOWARD RICE / GAP PHOTOS, JONATHAN BUCKLEY / GAP PHOTOS, TREVOR SIMS / GARDEN WORLD IMAGES.COM, CAROLE DRAKE / ALAMY

Cultivation

- Full sun is the requirement for the vast majority of 'silvers'. They are often happy in poor soils, are drought tolerant, and often tolerate exposed sites, although as a general rule cold easterly or northerly winds will cause more damage than warmer westerlies. It has always been assumed that they need better than average drainage, but doubt has been cast on this by recent research trials. To be safe though, avoid damp soils or sites where water gathers.
- Growth in fertile moist soil conditions tends to be very rapid, encouraging at first but possibly leading to misshapen plants; high fertility may also lead to a reduced lifespan. So, there are no advantages to being too nice to silvers – think of them as preferring an ascetic life.
- Sub-shrubs have an inherent tendency to be short-lived – 10-20 years – and in some cases to become very untidy with age. Light pruning once a year helps keep them compact and better shaped. Most are very easy to propagate, from cuttings of the current year's growth taken in summer, so it is not so difficult to multiply and replace favourite plants.

Good combinations

Silver makes a fantastic background for flower colours; it has a particularly affinity with pink – indeed a classic early summer combination is silver and purple foliage with pink flowers. In winter, combinations have to reflect the limited range of possibilities: bronze grasses and sedges work well with silvers, yellow ones less so, while silver and clipped box is a classic combination – a more modern variation here would be silvers with hellebore foliage. Silvers tend to be low-growing, so they can be used as a foreground for taller grasses or the brilliantly coloured stems of willows and dogwoods. With the advance of warmer weather, bulbs can be shown off beautifully by silver: blues and pinks in particular, with dark purple ▷

▷ tulips the most striking. Bold contrasts can be created with the emerging foliage of dark-leaved plants such as *Lysimachia* 'Firecracker'.

Propagation

Given that many silver and grey-leaved plants have short lifespans or look leggy after around five years, it is useful to be able to propagate them. Cuttings are ideally taken of 'semi-ripe' growth in summer; this means growth that is not so young it feels soft and wilts really quickly, nor stiff or becoming obviously woody.

If possible, a cut should be made with a sharp knife immediately below where a leaf joins a stem. Lower leaves that are going to be buried in compost should be carefully stripped off. Cuttings should be inserted (about a dozen to a 9cm-wide pot) in a 50/50 mix of Levington-type compost and gravel (or ideally perlite) and then placed in a shady place. Pots can be placed in loose transparent plastic bags but a watch must be kept for leaves going mouldy or rotting. With luck, cuttings should be established by the autumn, but are best left in a cold frame or other sheltered place until spring.

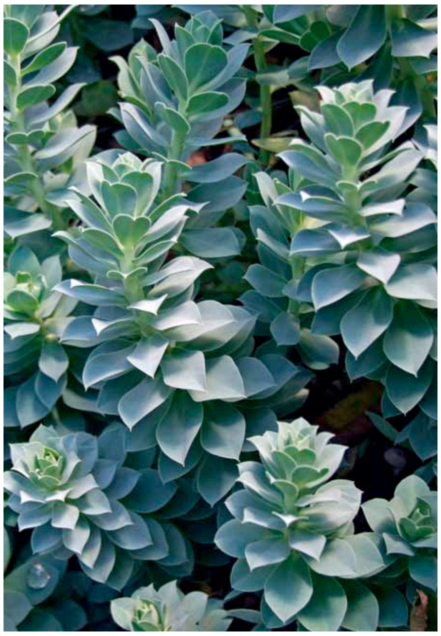
Books

The classic is Mrs Desmond Underwood's *Grey and Silver Plants* (Collins, 1971), easily available second-hand. More up-to-date are: Karen Platt's *Silver Lining* (Black Tulip Publishing, 2005), and *Elegant Silvers: Striking Plants for Every Garden* by Jo Gardner and Karen Bussolini (Timber Press, 2005).

Where to see and buy

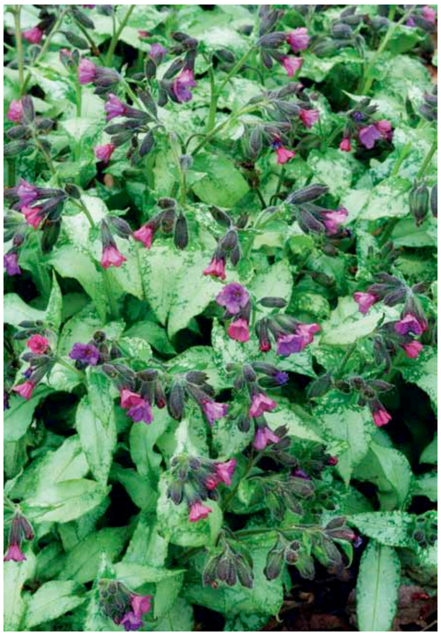
- **Lavender**
www.downderry-nursery.co.uk

- **National Collection Artemisia,**
supplying plants in small quantities
Elsworth Herbs, Farthingwood,
Broadway, Sidmouth, Devon
EX10 8HS
john.twibell@btinternet.com



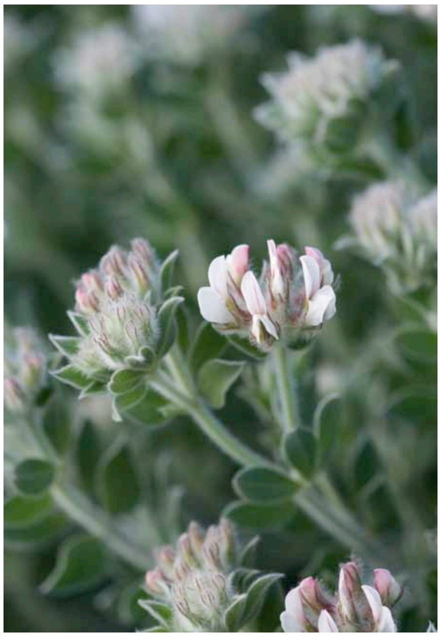
EUPHORBIA MYRSINITES

Intensely silvery leaves on ground-hugging stems sprawl out from a central point, with the familiar greeny-yellow *Euphorbia* flowers in tight clusters on the end of the stems in spring. A striking plant but hard to use – best on banks, rockeries, gravel gardens or retaining walls. Any soil in sun. A welcome tendency to self-seed. H 40cm S 60cm. AGM



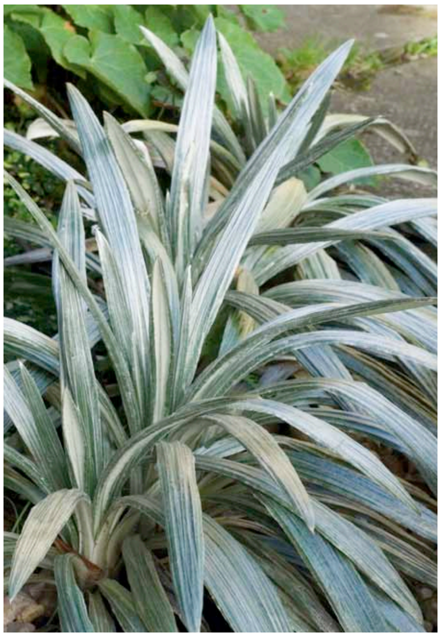
***PULMONARIA SACCHARATA* ARGENTEA GROUP**

Strictly speaking, this is a variegated plant rather than a true silver. Its appearance in mid-winter also depends very much on the weather. In mild winters its clumps of broad silver leaves are a wonderful complement to cyclamen and snowdrops. Light shade and humus-rich soil. H 40cm S 60cm. AGM



LOTUS HIRSUTUS

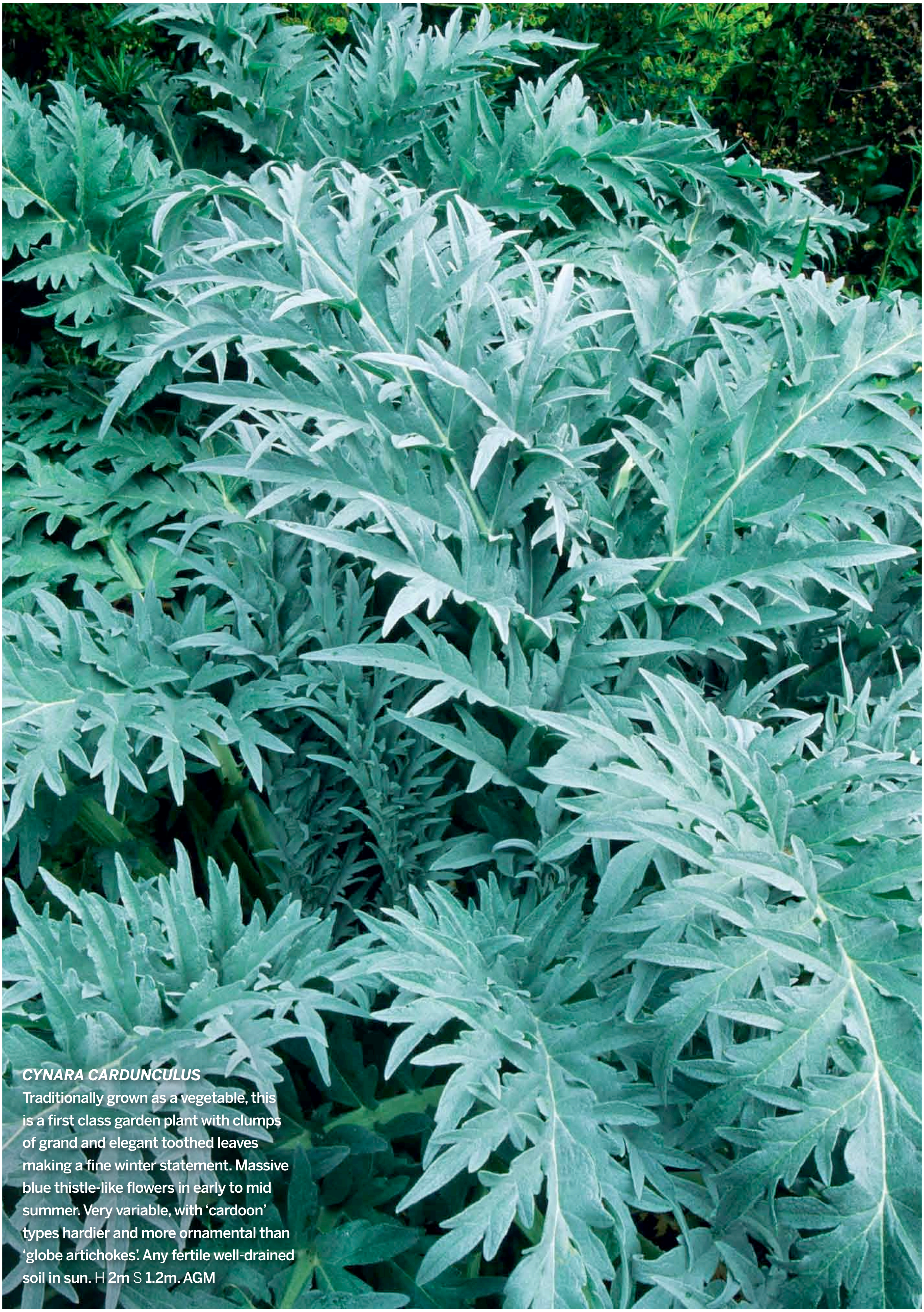
Definitely on the grey side of silver, this sub-shrub with soft hairy leaves combines well with lavenders and *Cistus* species on dry banks. Inclined to be rather weak stemmed, it's best used as a filler among other stiffer plants. Small white flowers in summer, followed by red seed pods. Sun, well-drained soils. H 60cm S 1m. AGM



CELMISIA SEMICORDATA

Celmisias only thrive in cool summer climates, but when happy will live for years, forming steadily expanding clumps of very stiff pointed leaves, lined and edged in silver. The flowers are much like large lawn daisies. This New Zealand mountain plant needs moist, humus-rich but very sharply drained soil in sun or light shade. H 60cm S 1.2m.

M&N / ALAMY, JOHN GLOVER / THE GARDEN COLLECTION, JONATHAN BUCKLEY / GAP PHOTOS, LIZ COLE / GARDEN WORLD IMAGES.COM



CYNARA CARDUNCULUS
Traditionally grown as a vegetable, this is a first class garden plant with clumps of grand and elegant toothed leaves making a fine winter statement. Massive blue thistle-like flowers in early to mid summer. Very variable, with 'cardoon' types hardier and more ornamental than 'globe artichokes'. Any fertile well-drained soil in sun. H 2m S 1.2m. AGM

JOHN GLOVER / ALAMY

Jinny Blom

Meet the designer who creates calm oases for her A-list clients, yet took a circuitous route to the top of her profession

WORDS JODIE JONES PHOTOGRAPH CHARLIE HOPKINSON

There is nothing conventional about Jinny Blom. She is a top garden designer with an exclusive international client list, but you probably wouldn't guess that at first meeting. A brunette ball of energy with an infectious laugh, she has no trace of that precious reverence that defines some in her profession. "I am a spacialist," she says. "I walk into a garden and it is instantaneous for me. I know how it will work best."

She set up her own garden design studio in 2000 and only two years later was working with the Prince of Wales to design a garden at Chelsea. Since then she has created many amazing gardens all over the world, and her business is going from strength to strength.

> *"No human being is beyond reach, and if you can change their environment they will improve"*

Yet she has no formal training, and by her own admission didn't really concentrate on a specific career until she was 27. She is one of those people to whom things just happen.

Jinny was born in Leamington Spa into a family she describes as "posh but poor, intellectual but with unorthodox ideas about education". She attended a liberal arts grammar school where the children painted murals of Jimi Hendrix on the corridor walls. "I think that was where I first discovered that I had a three-dimensional view of the world," she says. "It was also where I learned to get on with things. I had no one to guide me. I left school at 16 and just started working."

Jinny feels the theme of her life has been to create the spaces in which other people do things, though her route into horticulture was unusual. "My ex-husband's ex-wife worked at a residential charity for people with mental health problems in South London and asked me to help out. I loved it and started training as a transpersonal psychologist. By my early 30s I was co-director of the charity."

Horticultural therapy formed part of the residents' rehabilitation and Jinny had long been interested in gardening herself. "I don't do things by halves," she says. "I watched *Gardeners' World* religiously and read endlessly – serious technical books, not ones with pretty pictures."

Her best friend at the time was Kew-trained Ian Kirby who, together with his partner Gervase Jackson-Stops, was creating an extraordinary garden at their home, The Menagerie, in Northamptonshire.

"I spent a lot of time with them when they were renovating the house and grounds and I loved what they were doing. But then, devastatingly, Ian and Gervase got sick and died within six months of each other." This was a turning point for Jinny. "When Ian died I gardened so that his work would not remain unfinished. It felt like the start of something new."

Then, in 1996, she met designer Dan Pearson. "His business had exploded and he needed someone to help him for a few days a week." Although by this stage she had trained as a psychotherapist for nine years, she had no hesitation in resigning and starting anew.

In fact in some ways she did not see her change of career as a huge change of direction. "One thing I learned for certain when I worked in therapy was that no human being is beyond reach, and if you can change their environment they will improve. That is what you do as a designer – create an environment in which the person can be their best self."

Perhaps that explains why even her most ardent fans would be hard pushed to describe the quintessential Jinny Blom garden. "I don't have a style," she says. "I have no hubris. I'm not doing this for immortality. I just want to make gardens that work for the place and the person."

It is harder work than she might let on, and a bout of serious illness two years ago caused her to re-evaluate her life and habits ("I nearly died. That makes you think!"). Today she is fitter than ever, and every Tuesday night she gets together with Brian Eno and his choir to belt out improvised country and gospel. "It's my church," Jinny says.

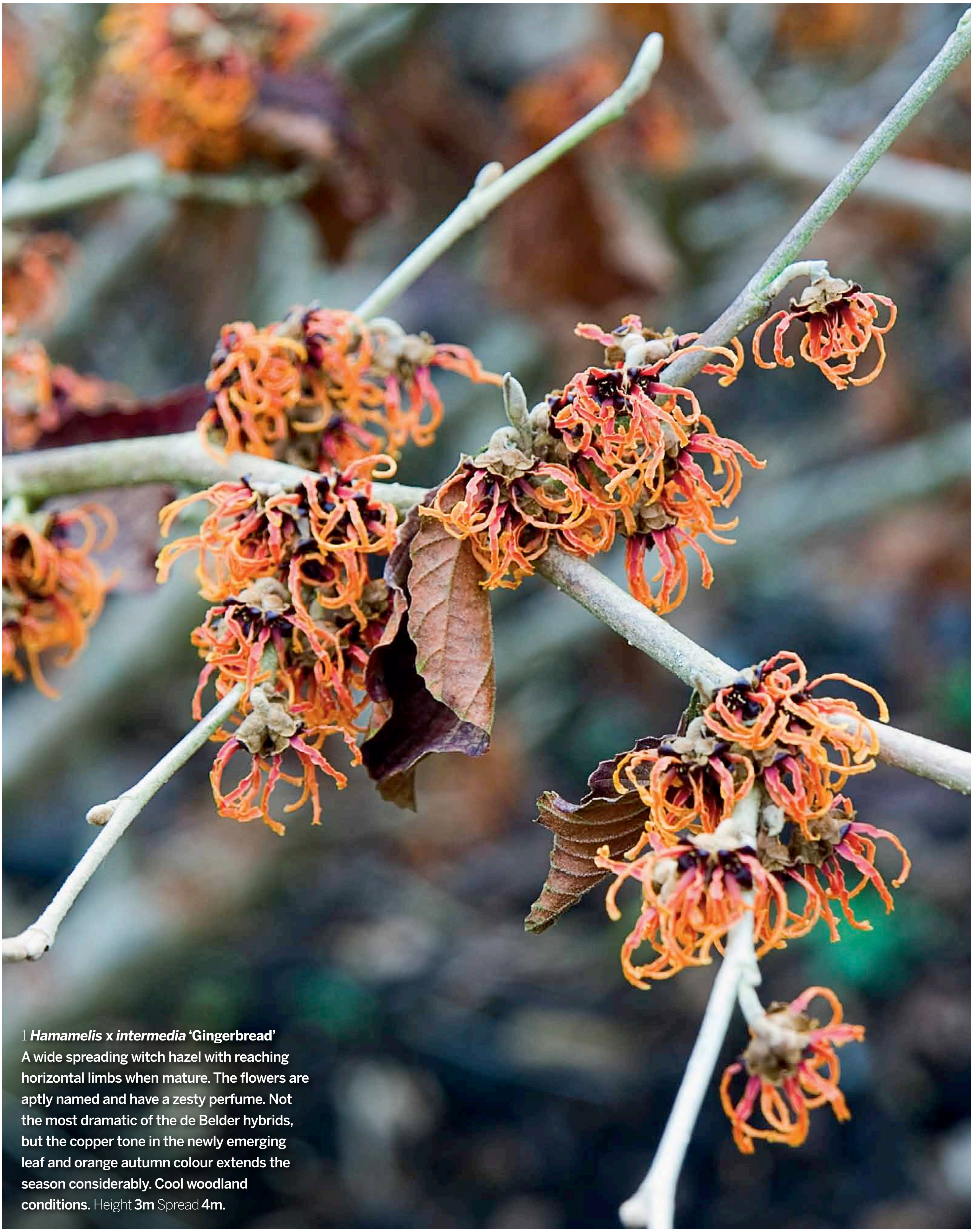
But she has no plan to give up designing gardens. "Why would I? I absolutely love the whole process of creating beautiful gardens. Even after all this time, every new project gives me such a buzz. And I am fortunate to get the most fantastic clients. We have an engagement of minds that leads to amazing commissions. I have one client who called me in as a landscape designer, but I ended up reworking the kitchen and designing fireplaces. Eventually, I even did the flowers for his daughter's wedding!"

Her aim, she says, "is always to create calm spaces, places of safety, security, beauty." And what impels her to do it? "I'm not sure I know. All I do know is that I can't not do it."

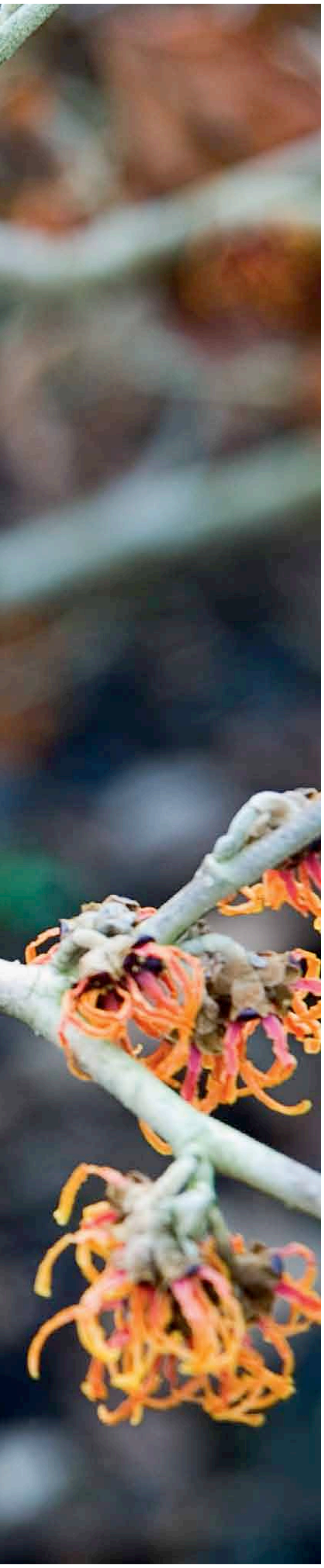
- www.jinnyblom.com

NEXT MONTH Dan Heims, plant breeder of many garden favourites.

Kubota
TORS



1 ***Hamamelis* x *intermedia* 'Gingerbread'**
A wide spreading witch hazel with reaching horizontal limbs when mature. The flowers are aptly named and have a zesty perfume. Not the most dramatic of the de Belder hybrids, but the copper tone in the newly emerging leaf and orange autumn colour extends the season considerably. Cool woodland conditions. Height **3m** Spread **4m.**



CAROLE DRAKE / GARDEN PICTURE LIBRARY / GETTY IMAGES

Shrubs for winter interest

In the colder months, when your garden is bare, there are still shrubs that can delight the eye

WORDS DAN PEARSON

Dan Pearson is a garden designer, plantsman and columnist.

In terms of scale, a garden can change dramatically when the perennial layer of the garden is in retreat and the leaves are down. Fences, sheds and boundaries reappear and all too often you lose the sense of mystery that comes with not being able to see everything at once. Perhaps more than at any other time in the year, shrubs come into their own, providing much needed structure and halting light as it slips through at a low angle.

Once again, as with all good planting, the key is in the layering and an evergreen contingent can help to provide a reliable foundation. You should not need more than about 30 per cent in a planting scheme, but it will help in providing the weight and the volume for one layer to work effectively against the next. Evergreen oaks, holly and *Prunus lusitanica* can provide this with ease, but too much evergreen can shade out the understory and make a planting too weighty with the addition of summer foliage. When the garden is bare, it is important that it appears in the right places.

Shrub uses

Evergreen shrubs might be used as a means of distracting your eye from a shed or a gate or an overlooking neighbour. Choose plants with a soft outline rather than a formal one to avoid doing the opposite and drawing the eye. The general rule goes that large leaves like *Fatsia* attract attention, while the smaller leaves of a plant such as *Skimmia* might recede and make for a more modest backdrop. Again, leave room enough for the shrub of choice to be appreciated in its own right rather than be relied upon purely as filler. Used this way, mid-sized evergreens such as *Sarcococca* and *Viburnum* can provide a foil for plants that need a lift. White stemmed birch, bright *Hamamelis* or pale deciduous *Viburnum* will be clearer for having their flowers set against dark foliage. Evergreens are best planted in the first part of winter or after the worst of the freeze in early spring. Remember to keep them watered in winter, as they can be prone to drying out, particularly while they are establishing.

The outline and form of deciduous shrubs can be played to great advantage in the dormant season. A dark backdrop will help to throw pale-stemmed shrubs such as *Rubus thibetanus* and *Salix irrorata* into relief, while backlighting can reveal interesting thorns or peeling bark. Good structural form is worth cultivating as winter can often be a third of the year's interest. Multi-stemmed shrubs should be kept to the best-looking limbs and room be given to a shrub with a fine winter outline rather than losing it within shrubbery. Hold off from winter pruning shrubs such as *Buddleia* and *Hydrangea*, which retain interesting seed heads. Consider placing them where light can be caught in their limbs.

When compiling a list of my most favoured shrubs for winter I choose evergreens for their support and simplicity and will never favour complicated variegation. Those that flower in the winter and provide flux, light and contrast reside high on the list. It is then that I will go to the Hillier's arboretum or the winter garden at Anglesey Abbey to remind myself of their significance. Flowers in the dark months are uplifting and surprisingly, many are also scented, providing you with good reason to venture out into the cold. Though you might on first impression consider the humble *Sarcococca* or *Daphne* not worthy of a position close to your main door, this is exactly where they work the hardest to remind you of the good things to come. ☐

• Turn the page for Dan Pearson's continued choice of shrubs for winter interest.

2 *Rosa omeiensis* var. *pteracantha*

The Mount Omei Rose from China needs to be placed so that the sun illuminates its dramatic crimson thorns from behind. These are brightest on young growth so remove a third of the eldest wood every year. Ferny foliage, small white flowers and red autumnal hips lend the shrub a wild air in the summer but as an ornamental it packs a punch in the winter. H 3m S 1.8m.

3 *Acacia baileyana* 'Purpurea'

A large, rounded Australasian shrub or small tree for a warm position. Perfumed mimosa flowers in late winter followed by thunderous grey-purple foliage. A most unusual leaf, highly ornamental and tough. Best in an urban setting, it is a remarkable evergreen. H 7m S 5m. AGM*

4 *Lonicera fragrantissima*

Best for scent

A tough winter flowering honeysuckle, which should used more. Deliciously scented creamy flowers among bare branches in the depths of winter. Red berries in autumn and retaining some foliage in mild winters. H 2.5m S 3m.

5 *Ilex aquifolium* 'JC Van Tol'

A female, self-pollinating holly that doesn't need a partner to fruit. The lustrous, dark green leaves on deep purple shoots are almost spineless and it fruits reliably and heavily. Relatively upright growth and best grown as a free-standing shrub rather than a hedge. H 4m S 3m. AGM

6 *Corylus avellana* 'Purpurea'

The red filbert is a superior plant to *C. maxima* 'Purpurea', being more open in habit and with room in the branches to appreciate the form. Winter catkins are smoky-pink and hang in long tassels. Dark purple foliage easing to ruby over the summer. An ideal companion for woodland perennials and easily coppiced on a six- to eight-year cycle. H 6m S 6m.

7 *Rubus thibetanus* 'Silver Fern'

Best for winter presence

A more sociable winter bramble than *R. cockburnianus*, half the size and better behaved. The stems are dusted with a blue-white bloom that gives them a ghostly winter presence. Cut to the base in early spring to refresh growth and to encourage the ferny foliage. Preferring good living but otherwise easy. H 2.4m S 3m. AGM

8 *Sarcococca ruscifolia* var. *chinensis* 'Dragon Gate'

Notable for the fine foliage and delicate growth. A delightful compact shrub of no more than a

2 TREVOR NICHOLSON CHRISTIE / GAP PHOTOS; 3 CLIVE NICHOLS / GAP PHOTOS; 4 HOWARD RICE / GARDEN PICTURE LIBRARY / GETTY IMAGES; 5 HOLMES GARDEN PHOTOS / ALAMY; 6 HOWARD RICE / GARDEN PICTURE LIBRARY / GETTY IMAGES; 7 J S SIRA / GAP PHOTOS

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*HOLDS AN AWARD OF GARDEN MERIT FROM THE ROYAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY.

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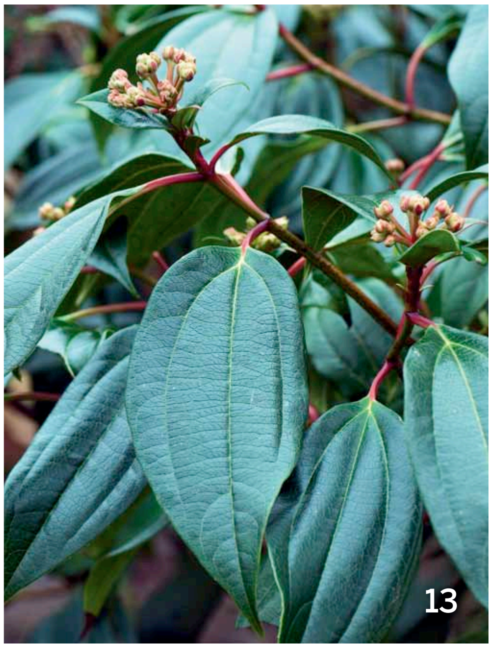
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8 MARTIN HUGHES-JONES / GAP PHOTOS; 9 JENNY LILLY / GARDEN WORLD IMAGES; 10 JASON INGRAM / GAP PHOTOS; 11 ANDREA JONES / GARDEN WORLD IMAGES; 12 DAVE BEVAN / ALAMY; 13 CAROLE DRAKE / GARDEN PICTURE LIBRARY / GETTY IMAGES

metre, with highly scented flowers from late December through to February. Happiest in cool conditions, making it a notable understory companion. H 60cm S 60cm.

9 ***Chimonanthus praecox* 'Grandiflorus'**

Button-shaped buds pop among bare branches to reveal perfumed flowers, the colour and texture of bees wax and stained dull red in this form. It needs heat to ripen the wood, but will flower against a warm wall. Adaptable and happy on chalk. H 3m S 4m. AGM

10 ***Salix gracilistyla* 'Melanostachys'**

Best for colour contrast

Salix gracilistyla is a well-behaved, silver-catkinned willow favoured by early bees but the black form 'Melanostachys' is a choice and remarkable plant, found only in cultivation. The catkins are inky black but are bitter chocolate on close examination. Brick-red anthers turn yellow as they release their pollen and appear freely on bright green limbs. H 1.3m S 1.2m.

11 ***Phillyrea latifolia***

A glossy Mediterranean adapted to exposed positions and coastal sites. Undemanding on the eye, this quiet evergreen has all the character of an evergreen oak but considerably less stature. Will eventually form a hawthorn-sized tree. H 8m S 8m.

12 ***Chaenomeles* x *superba* 'Nicoline'**

Easy and accommodating, happy in sun or shade and trained against a wall or freestanding. Loose, unstructured growth that sprawls to about a metre or so. Deciduous but sometimes retaining the orange fruits, which appear in tandem with the violently scarlet flowers of late winter. Prune immediately after flowering. H 1.5m S 2m. AGM

13 ***Viburnum cinnamomifolium***

Best for texture

The gangly cousin of *V. davidii*. Dark, heavily textured leaves, leathery to the touch, with brown stems and shoots. Blue-black fruits in winter following a modest show of creamy summer flowers. A quiet shrub, happy to drop into the background but always nice to stumble upon. H 2m S 2.4m. AGM □

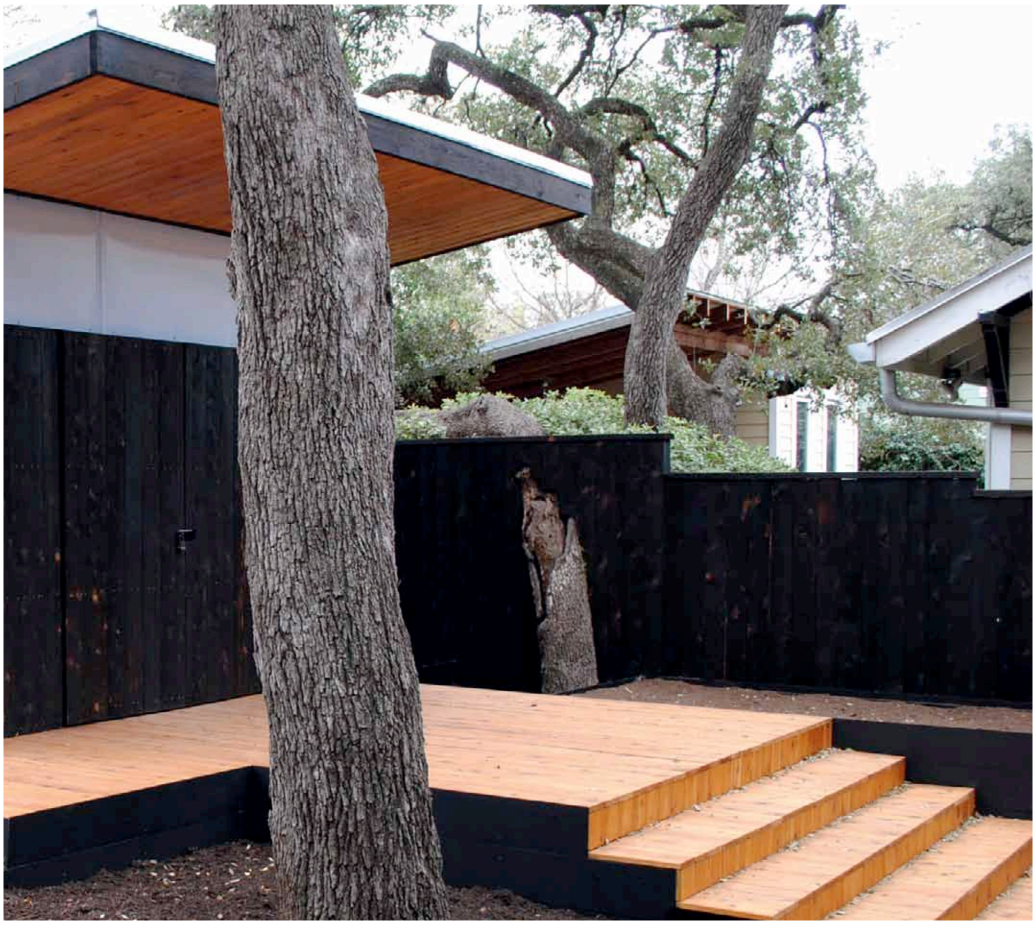
WHERE TO BUY

For a list of stockists for each of these plants, see *RHS Plant Finder 2012-2013* (RHS, 2012) or the RHS plantfinder online at http://apps.rhs.org.uk/rhsplantfinder

10 ways to improve your garden

WORDS JINNY BLOM

I've lived in my current house for the last 26 years. My garden has changed at least four times in that period as time, energy and budget permitted, and currently is undergoing a major overhaul, the biggest yet! But what can we all do to revamp the most important room in the house? Dreams are free and winter is long, so now is the perfect time to assess the humdrum and bedraggled mess of spent pots, tatty furniture, drunken fences and questionable paving and get to work on creating a realisable dream. Personally, I find that shared thinking is invaluable. So let me help you with my ten essential ideas for transforming your own plot into a space that will make you proud.

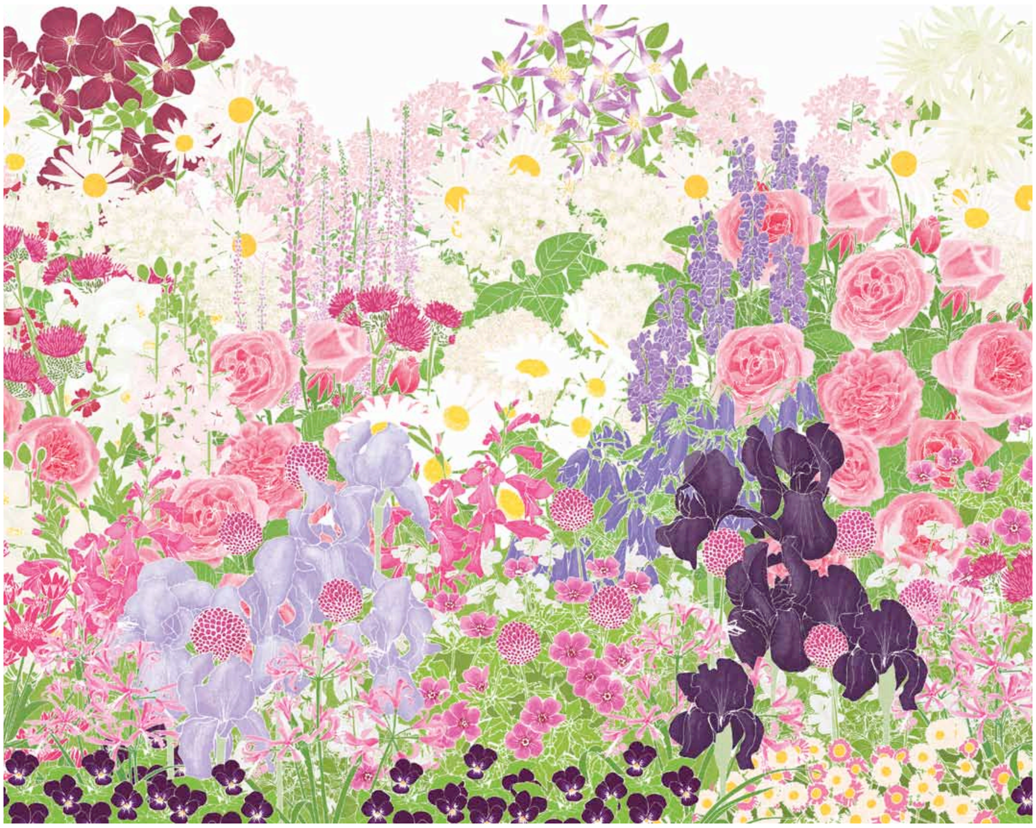


ROBERT E GAY / THOUGHTBARN

1 Boundaries

First port of call: what are the boundaries and do you like them? Look out of each window and consider what meets the eye. Does it do justice to your interior and your sense of aesthetic value? If it is a solid but ugly boundary such as a wall or a sturdy fence then it can be clad, using some imagination, in something more evocative. Try bundles of tall hazel rods sewn together with rough manila rope. This will necessitate some research into either tree surgeons or local woodland trusts to find out who is coppicing, and then a bit of effort. The complex density of the hazel will become a little city of insects and last around five years.

I love charred timber fences (pictured), and chestnut – or even bandsawn oak – a blow torch and a strong wire brush for rubbing back, makes a lovely finish. And charring is a natural preservative. Alternatively you could spray your fencing a deep graphite grey or a chalky ointment pink and bounce some light back into a dreary corner.



HANNAH MCVICAR

2 Flowers

Now is a very good time to be completely ruthless about borders. Were they really any good this summer or are you simply being sentimental? If in doubt, grub it out. A clean sweep means you can freshen the soil, add lots of muck and start again – even just enough time to get new bulbs in too. Consider the orientation and available light, and then get to work on colour. GARDENS ILLUSTRATED has done some fantastic articles on how to plant a border (see June 2009, issue 150, for the design illutrated left) and it's worth studying these and giving the scheme a head start.

Play with colour, heights, flowering seasons and throw in your interests such as grasses, or bee and butterfly friendly plants. Vernal gardens are marvellous for a north-facing bed as they are in full kick in winter and spring and can then get quieter and go over to ferns and the like.

3 Trees and shrubs

Pruning and training is a very inexpensive route to creating a new look by managing mangled and overgrown shrubs and trees. I created a whole new garden once from a very dark and revolting looking Victorian laurel shrubbery. By exposing the underlying structure and lifting the canopies a wonderful and mysterious world was revealed. And you have other options – why not plant a tree, a big beautiful one, and add a new dynamic to your garden? Think about whether your trees and shrubs are compatible – try to create a look that has coherence. Ask yourself if you have a favourite place you'd like to emulate. What are the most evocative planting combinations for you? In the UK you can pretty much have it all as our climate is so forgiving. Consider the usual and infinitely affecting choices for seasonal change; colour, blossom, fruits and berries, leaf shapes and textures, and then create your new look.

ANTHONY BRAME

4 Pots and containers

The bigger the better! Anything as long as it's big. Plants need a lot of root space and water and stability from wind. To make the plants happy and to minimise how much human effort is required to keep them going, choose big. I like all sorts of containers so look out for nice galvanised ones, or well-made coopered wooden pots with steel bands (try www.dewiltfang.com) or great big plain Italian terracotta. It is worth spending as a good one will last forever. Consider very carefully where it will go, as once they are filled they are hard to move.

WWW.POTSANDPITHOI.COM

WWW.MANUFACTUM.CO.UK

WWW.DEWILTFANG.COM

WWW.THEBROOKEPOTTERY.COM

ANDREW MONTGOMERY

5 Eating

The pleasure of gathering one's own food from the garden is a pleasure unsurpassed. Smugly setting down a tiny bowl of tiny alpine strawberries from a garden three feet square knowing the flavour will provoke admiration and envy. Why not make veg beds and herb beds on legs like tables so they are easy to manage and away from the neighbour's cats (don't get me started)? It's relatively easy – and advisable – to protect table beds with netting. Maybe building a proper outdoor kitchen is a consideration. Pizza ovens are easy to build and can be used as a wood-fired fireplace even if you aren't hungry.

CLIVE NICHOLS / GAP PHOTOS

6 If it moves, include it

Birds, bees, butterflies, foxes, hedgehogs, dogs, cats and squirrels will use the garden more than you do. There are many things on the market now to 'encourage wildlife' but nothing does that better than good design and intelligent planting. Thrushes like good solid hedges, especially yew topiary. I have wrens nesting in *Cissus striata*, and the pond is full of life – newts, dragonflies and damsel flies. The pond is formal, but they don't mind that one bit.

Foxes lay a trail across a garden from which they rarely deviate so if you have them, include their route and save the misery of mashed up plants. The loathsome grey squirrel has to be endured, as do parakeets here in London, but I suppose all life is better than no life.

Bees are to have kindness lavished upon them and the only bits of kit worth buying are bumble bee houses and mason bee nests. Both are fascinating and instructive.

7 Surfaces

There is more to life than cheap concrete paving and sometimes one can alter the quality of a small space immeasurably with a good floor. I very much like decking, even though it's a faux pas to say so. I do, however, like reclaimed timber best as it has an integrity to it, whereas new hardwood evokes guilt however prominently the FSC label is displayed.

Lately there is a revival of interest in encaustic tiles and patterned concrete tiles [try www.emeryetcie.com]. Most Victorian houses used to have gaily tiled front paths in complex patterns. I almost went for grey and black encaustic tiles in my own garden, but then opted for tiny brick pavers from Belgium [try www.wienerberger.co.uk].

Gravel is another favourite, especially if you have uneven ground to contend with and wish to avoid enormous amounts of levelling. But do make sure it is properly laid rather than just scattered like crumbs over the surface.

EMERY & CIE

8 Views

Boundaries are also intricately linked to views. It is vital to consider these and be very selective. My own garden only has one good view and everything else needs to fade into insignificance. Don't block a bad view – fade it out. Blocking views with *leylandii* or whatever only draws attention to them and makes a bad aspect worse. The fade is a subtle and effective solution – a gauzy shrub such as *Genista aetnensis* (pictured) will soften and render invisible an ugly view and thus lend intensity to a good one. Tangential views are as charming as full frontal, so consider flinging a path off at a wonky angle to suddenly present you with the view you never knew you had.

HOWARD RICE / GETTY IMAGES / GARDEN PICTURE LIBRARY

HARPUR GARDEN LIBRARY / CORBIS

9 Pavilions and summer houses

In Georgian times town gardens were often graceful places of escape from the trials of life. I recently discovered that the high walled gardens of the charming villas of Maida Vale in London were where newly wealthy City merchants kept their mistresses. Most gardens were equipped with delightful niches made of trellis. Erotic niches! Make no mistake, I think a little of this is good in a garden – somewhere to recite poetry as the moon rises. Find a basic shed at a well-known DIY store and then dress it up to suit your proclivities.

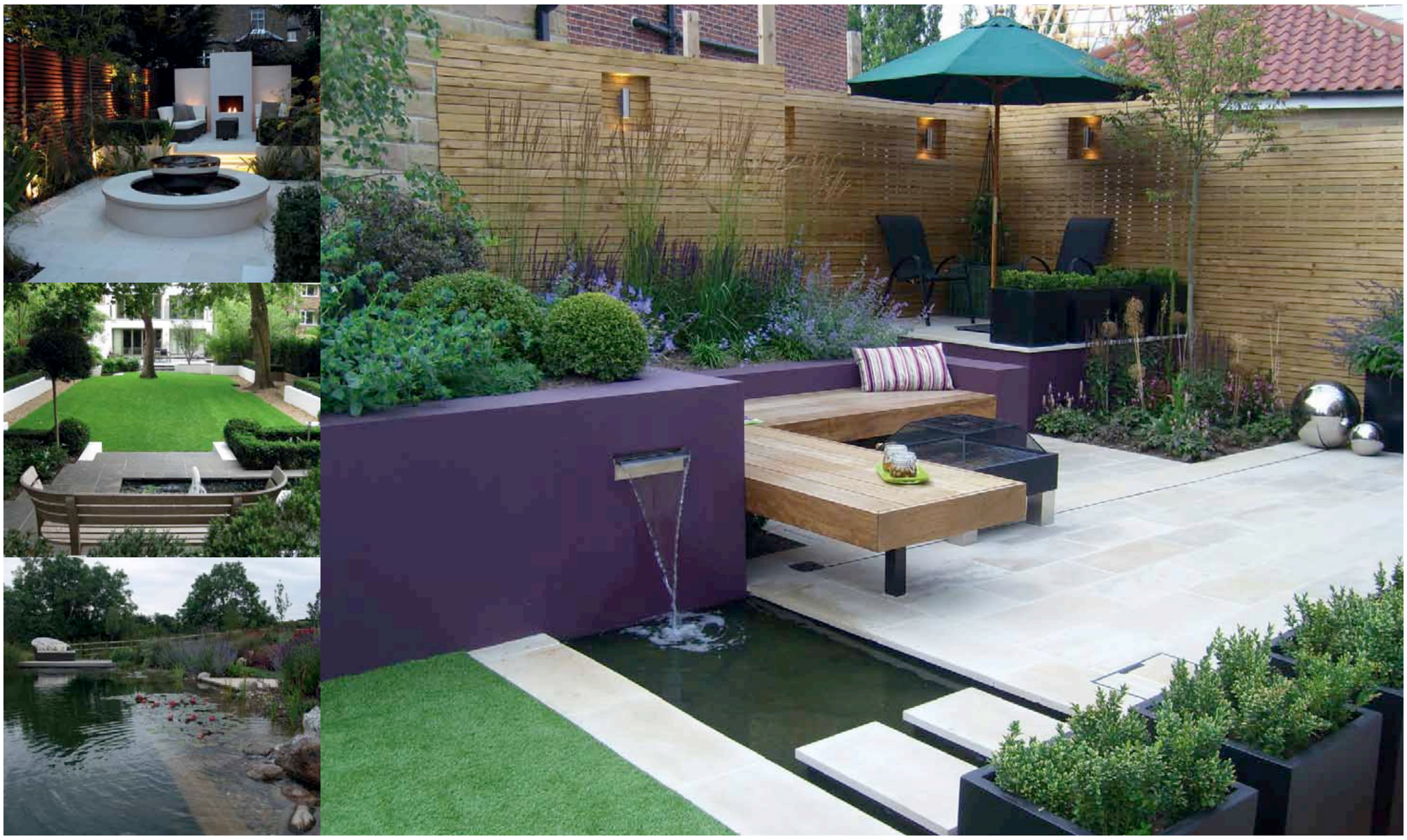
LUCY SMITH GARDEN SCULPTURE / RACHEL WARNE

10 Water

Every garden must have water – it really doesn't matter how you do it, but do it. It could be tiny pools made from old washing-up bowls, Japanese water stones or ponds of any size and shape – from formally edged to contemporary to muddy wallow. Just make sure you have water features – yes, even an overturned Cretan pot with a pump will do because when you see the blue tits in it having a bath, you will feel nothing but delight.

In Turkey there is a long tradition of musical fountains and they used to be things of great charm and distinction. The modern equivalent has a terrible battery operated music box inside, but what the hell. Kitsch is fantastic and better to have musical water than no water at all.

Think about wall plaques – there are gorgeous ones to be had and they animate a tiny space beautifully [try www.lucysmith.org.uk]. Save water as well; water butts and tanks are vital for the garden especially in these varied climatic conditions. To me, wood and water are better than cash in the attic. ◻



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Latest design news, design ideas

'Habitat' by Tania Kovats, featured in this year's Chelsea Fringe. Entries are being invited for 2013's event – see page 80.

BRIAN WHAR. COURTESY UP PROJECTS

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News

COMPILED BY **ANNIE GATTI**

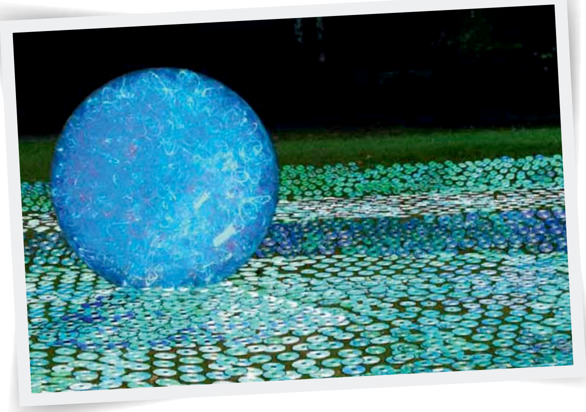
DESIGN COMPETITION

A garden that uses 7,000 clipped privet plants to make a green labyrinth beneath existing fruit trees and newly planted amelanchiers has won first prize in the 2012 'Best Private Plots' international garden design competition. Grassy paths create new vistas through the sloping plot, past a metal-framed log store, which doubles as a screen to close off the neighbouring property. The Green Wave garden in Erfurt, Germany, was designed by landscape architects Mann Landschaftsarchitektur.

INSTALLATION

Let there be light

Two new light installations by artist Bruce Munro will illuminate the grounds at Waddesdon Manor in Buckinghamshire this month. Thousands of CDs will cloak the banks of the amphitheatre to create a pool of light around the glowing blue 'moon', made up of 150 spheres fitted with coiled fibre optics. The second piece, 'Angel of Light' imprints a glinting circle of 50,000 CDs on the lawn in front of the Manor. Both installations will remain in place until 1 January 2013. Tel 01296 653226; www.waddesdon.org.uk



Blue Moon on a Platter by Bruce Munro provides added Christmas sparkle to the grounds at Waddesdon Manor.

Paul Amey's salmon swim gracefully through grass, adding a sense of movement.

SALMON SCULPTURE

Whether 'swimming' through lawns or poised above water, where their reflections create the illusion of submerged fish, Paul Amey's limited edition silvery salmon sculptures add movement to the garden.

Shaped in sand cast aluminium in three lengths (58cm, 70cm and 87cm) they are supplied with a stainless steel forked stand or disc and pole base. Prices start at £850, with discounts offered on multiple purchases. www.paulamey.co.uk

JORG BEHRENS, STEPHEN WEEKS.

SHOW AWARDS

Garden journey

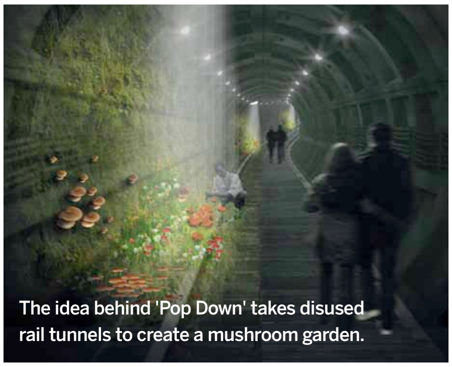
A star-shaped pool connected to four rills forms the peaceful centre of the 'Best in Show' garden by Lim In Chong at the third annual Gardening World Cup, held at the Huis Ten Bosch park in Nagasaki, southern Japan, in October. The Malaysian designer interpreted the show's theme 'Gardens for World Peace' by creating a journey from a stark landscape of rusted steel and stones to the enclosure of a Middle Eastern paradise garden, lush with plants, mainly in pastel shades, from the four continents. New Zealand designer Xanthe White won 'Best Design' for her timber-framed garden entered through exuberant vertical planting.

Lim In Chong's winning garden 'Eye to Eye' at the Gardening World Cup in Japan.

FRINGE FESTIVAL

Call for entries

Chelsea Fringe, the festival of flowers, gardens and gardening that sprung up at scores of venues across London for two weeks this summer is returning for a longer run next year. The organisers are inviting individuals and groups to pitch their ideas. To get a flavour of some of the events that took place last year visit www.chelseafringe.com. To take part in Chelsea Fringe 2013, which runs from 18 May to 9 June, email info@chelseafringe.com



The idea behind 'Pop Down' takes disused rail tunnels to create a mushroom garden.

DESIGN COMPETITION

Green spaces for London

A competition to find new ideas for green spaces in London produced an exciting shortlist that included mini orchards at bus shelters, mobile gardens on buses and linear parks alongside railway lines. The winning entry, 'Pop Down' designed by Fletcher Priest Architects, is an urban mushroom garden that transforms 10.5 miles of redundant Post Office railway tunnel into an oasis of mosses, lichen and fungi.

Notebook

- **The Herb Garden and Old English Garden** in Battersea Park run by the charity Thrive have won London's Best Community Garden in this year's London in Bloom awards.

- **IntoGardens,** is a new gardening app devised by designer James Alexander-Sinclair. For iPad users (iPad 2 or later), available quarterly at £2.99 or an annual subscription of £9.99, from the App Store.

- **Winter Beauties** is an RHS short course led by Jill Pearson offering ideas for winter. 11 December at Pershore College, Warwickshire. To book, visit www.warwickshire.ac.uk/courses.aspx

- **Chelsea gold medallist** Kate Gould gives a two-day workshop on 'Small and City Gardens' on 24 and 25 January at the English Gardening School, Chelsea Wharf, London. On 7 February Noël Kingsbury leads a 'Planting Design Masterclass' on making good plant selections. To book call 020 7352 4347 or visit www.englishgardeningschool.co.uk

- **A part-time course on plants and planting design,** taking place one day a week over three terms, starts at the KLC School of Design at Chelsea Harbour on 17 January 2013. The Professional Diploma in Garden Design and Horticulture starts on 15 April. Tel 020 7376 3377; www.klc.co.uk

FLETCHER PRIEST ARCHITECTS, BRIAN WHAR, COURTESY UP PROJECTS, LIM IN CHONG.

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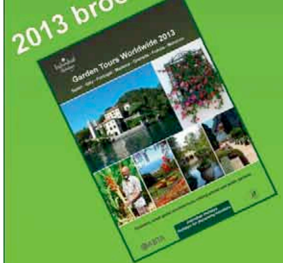

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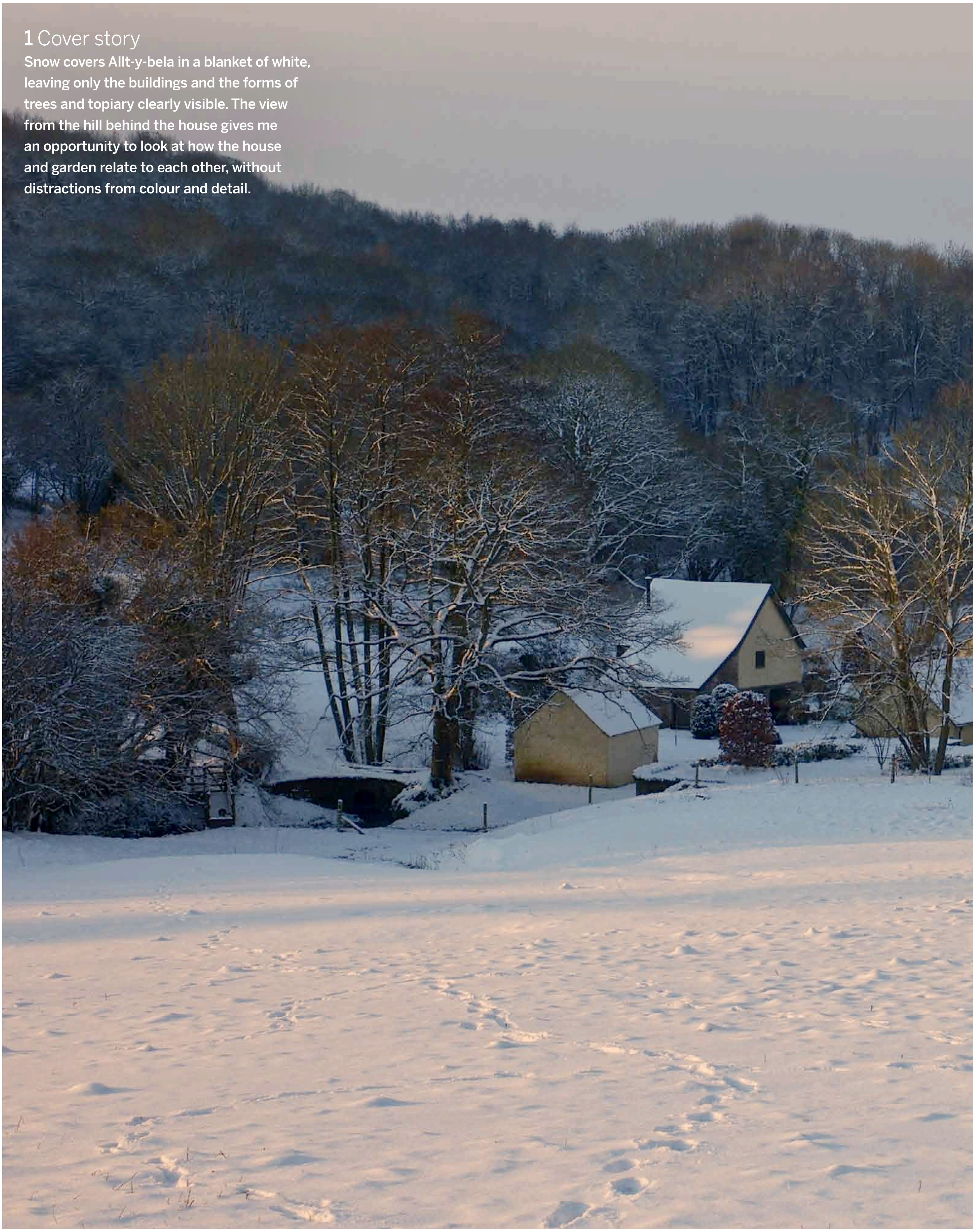


1 Cover story

Snow covers Allt-y-bela in a blanket of white, leaving only the buildings and the forms of trees and topiary clearly visible. The view from the hill behind the house gives me an opportunity to look at how the house and garden relate to each other, without distractions from colour and detail.

Arne Maynard is a leading garden designer based in London and Monmouthshire.

Christmas at Allt-y-bela

Come wind, rain or snow, Christmas is the time to enjoy the season and view the garden from a different perspective

WORDS **ARNE MAYNARD** PHOTOGRAPHS **WILLIAM COLLINSON**

6

6 Sugar craft

The last rose of summer, looking like a wonderful piece of confectionary, bent but somehow miraculously intact under a sprinkling of ice crystals.

Suppliers

At Langley Boxwood Nursery, they sell pre-clipped topiary forms or you can purchase bushy plants for clipping yourself. They also run courses on topiary. **www.boxwood.co.uk**

These three nurseries have a selection of excellent pre-formed topiary:

- **www.crowntopiary.co.uk**
- **www.majestictrees.co.uk**
- **www.romantic-garden-nursery.co.uk**

The intricacy of a laid hedge comes into sharp focus in the winter – it's a craft that's well worth supporting (see picture 4). The National Hedgelaying Society has a directory of groups – **www.hedgelaying.org.uk**

The quietness and stillness that descends on the house when it snows is something to be savoured. We go for long walks, make fires, and cook delicious meals. On Christmas Eve itself, we have a ritual of going out over the fields with the dogs to look for something that will be our Christmas tree. Whatever we find, a bough with mistletoe or a berried hawthorn branch, is brought back into the house, balanced in a great big urn and decorated with candles and a few hand-made stars or rosy crab apples.

Snow slows everything down and almost forces you to observe and appreciate what's around you. Familiar places look different, and I find myself noticing details like the last leaves hanging on a tree. Other things become special, like taking a brazier outside, lighting a fire and standing around it with friends, drinking sloe gin. For me, it's about being part of the environment, and really celebrating it, rather than moaning that you can't drive anywhere. On a snowy, sunny day I wouldn't think twice about having lunch outside. We'd wrap up and eat a hot stew with glasses of steaming mulled wine. ☐

In the February issue, designer Annie Guilfoyle begins a new series – Design Solutions.

GARDEN MUSEUM
GARDEN OF THE YEAR 2012
GARDENS ILLUSTRATED

Garden of the year

Each year the Garden Museum and GARDENS ILLUSTRATED select what they consider to be the most iconic garden of the last 12 months – one that captures the mood of the moment and reflects current trends in gardening.

The winner chosen as 2012's Garden of the Year is the Olympic Park, which provided just one of many golden moments at the London 2012 Olympics. The 250-hectare site was filled with 4,000 trees, 300,000 wetland plants, 15,000 square metres of lawns and more than 150,000 perennial plants.

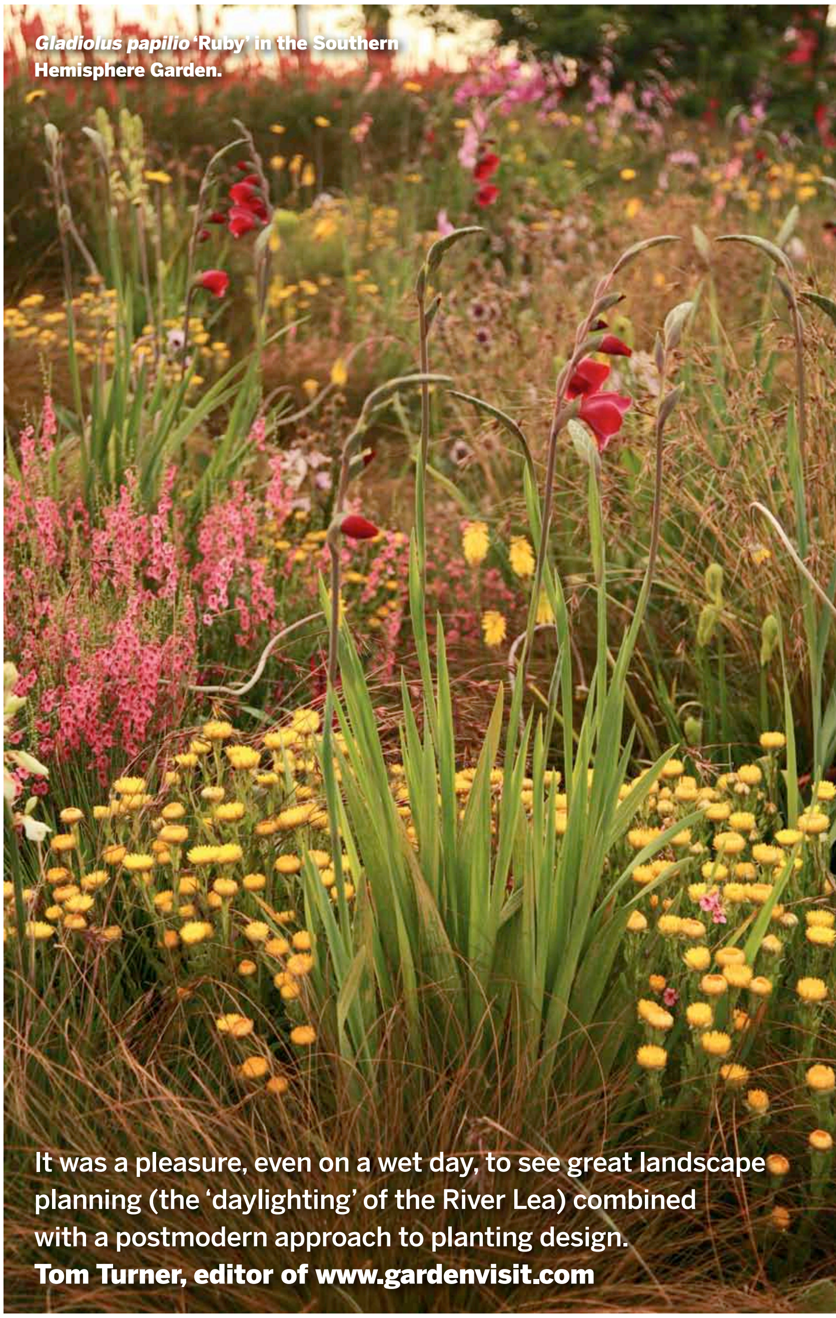
Among the key names involved in its planting were professors Nigel Dunnett and James Hitchmough of the University of Sheffield, who created fields of naturalistic wildflower meadows, timed to reach a glorious golden peak as the Games took place.

Working alongside them was designer Sarah Price, who created a story in planting, relating how and when, over the past 500 years, our most familiar plants arrived in our gardens.

The critically acclaimed gardens sparked huge interest, furthering the current interest in naturalistic plantings and nectar-rich flowers. Perhaps most exciting is the legacy these gardens provide as the Park is redeveloped over the coming year for housing, businesses and as public green space.

- You can keep an eye on the development of the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park at www.londonlegacy.co.uk and at www.noordinarypark.co.uk. Bus tours around the Park are available now until the first section of the park opens in July 2013.

The park design represented the unlikely fusion of apparently incompatible design elements (and egos): the fearless linear modernism of George Hargreaves with the pictorial meadows and innovative wetland plantings of the 'Sheffield School' designers, while Sarah Price was given the task of attempting to negotiate the difficult 'buffer zone' plantings between them. The temporary display of meadow flowers along the river almost lasted until the end of the Paralympics, and created a suitably festive air.
Tim Richardson, garden critic



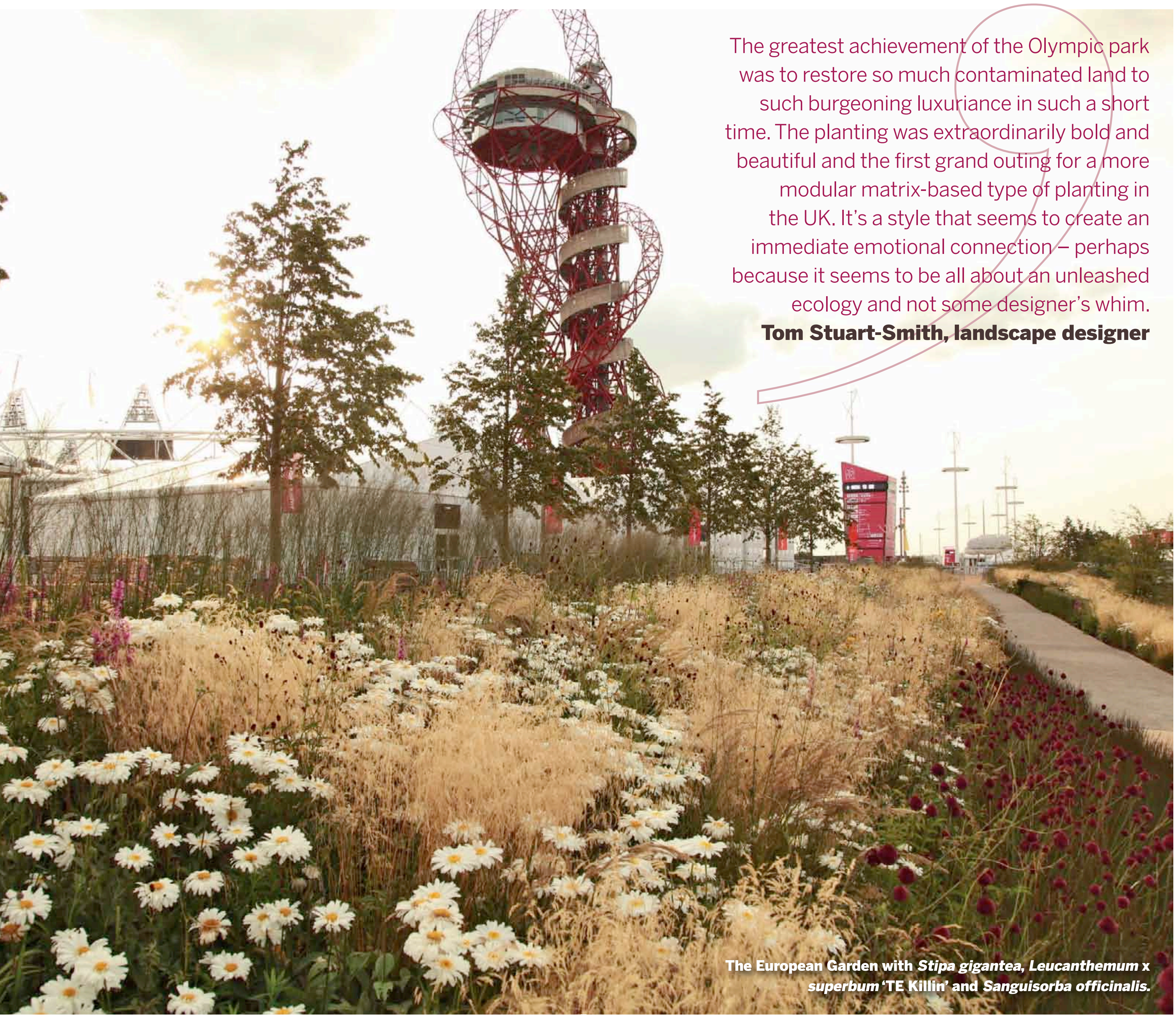
***Gladiolus papilio* 'Ruby' in the Southern Hemisphere Garden.**

It was a pleasure, even on a wet day, to see great landscape planning (the 'daylighting' of the River Lea) combined with a postmodern approach to planting design.
Tom Turner, editor of www.gardenvisit.com

The wildflower meadow in the South Park.

SARAH PRICE, MARIANNE MAJERUS.

> The greatest achievement of the Olympic park was to restore so much contaminated land to such burgeoning luxuriance in such a short time. The planting was extraordinarily bold and beautiful and the first grand outing for a more modular matrix-based type of planting in the UK. It's a style that seems to create an immediate emotional connection – perhaps because it seems to be all about an unleashed ecology and not some designer's whim.
> **Tom Stuart-Smith, landscape designer**



The European Garden with *Stipa gigantea, Leucanthemum* x *superbum* 'TE Killin' and *Sanguisorba officinalis.*

***Veronicastrum virginicum* 'Fascination' in the Great British Garden.**

The North American Garden features prairie plants.

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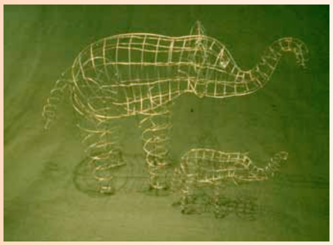
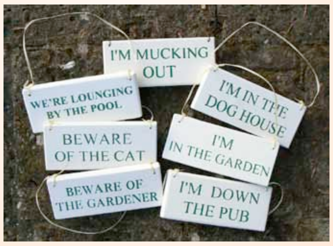


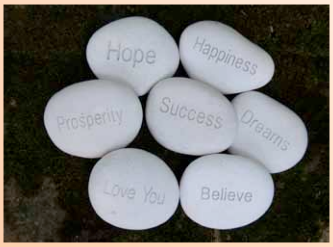
Topiary : Elephant, Cat, etc



I'M MUCKING OUT
WE'RE LOUNGING BY THE POOL
I'M IN THE DOG HOUSE
BEWARE OF THE CAT
I'M IN THE GARDEN
BEWARE OF THE GARDENER
I'M DOWN THE PUB

Hanging Wooden Signs : 60 Texts

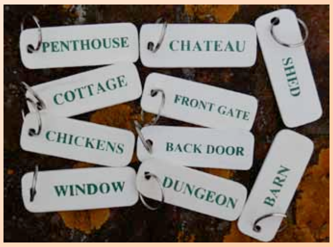
Limestone Toadstools



Hope
Happiness
Prosperity
Success
Dreams
Love You
Believe

Sentiment Stones

Wooden Hanging Baskets



PENTHOUSE
CHATEAU
SHED
COTTAGE
FRONT GATE
CHICKENS
BACK DOOR
WINDOW
DUNGEON
BARN

Wooden Keyrings : 90 locations

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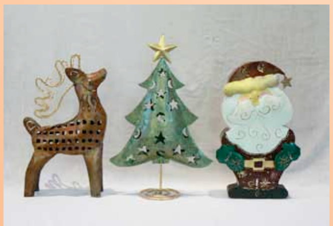

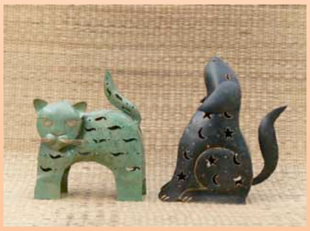

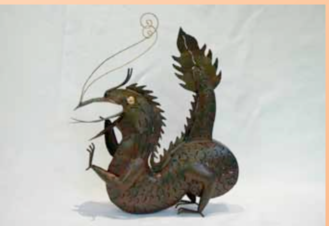

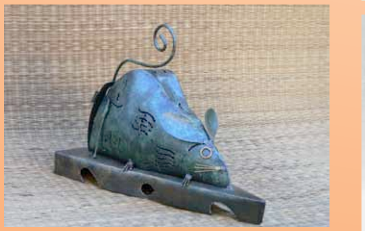

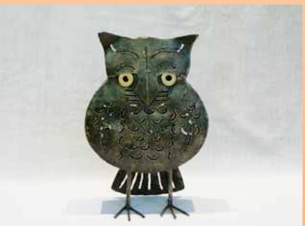

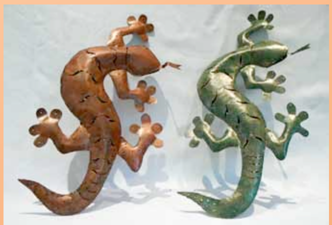

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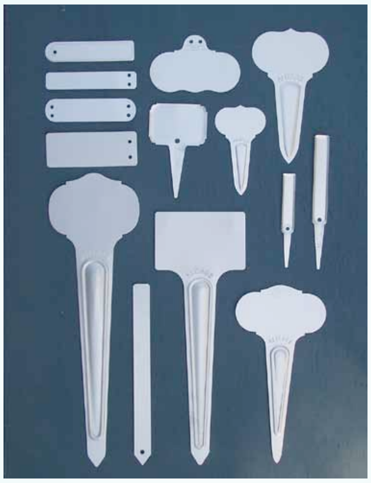

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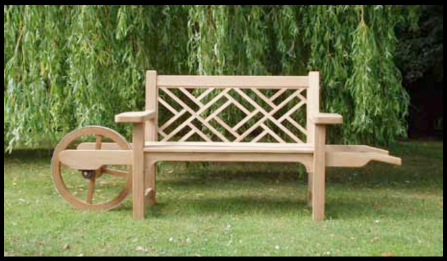
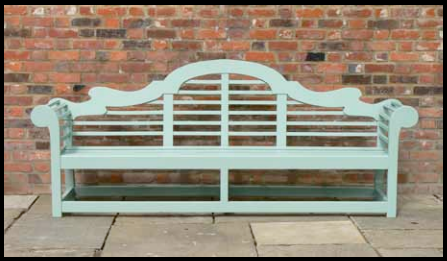
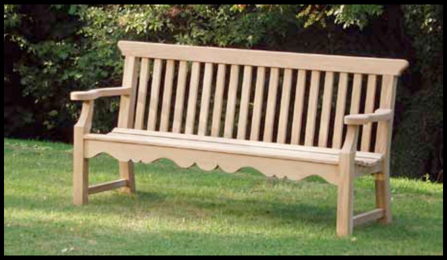


Chinoiserie Wheelbarrow Seat



Large Lutyens Seat painted Tioram Green



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Perennial Garden Plants GRAH
Tracy DiSabato-Aust
The Well-Tended Perennial Garden
DANIEL J. HINKLEY
The Explorer's Garden
Perennials VOLUME 1 EARLY PERENNIA
Perennials VOLUME 2 LATE PERENNIALS

Beth Chatto considers the finest books of her gardening life, beginning on page 91.

RACHEL WARNE

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Inside

Paint ideas

EASY IDEAS

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A breath of fresh air

UPCYCLING HEROES

Meet the people who are using their creative flair to transform fabrics, furniture and more

Vintage trunk

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Books special

Beth Chatto's favourite books

With a wealth of experience in gardening, who better to recommend the very best in garden reading?

PHOTOGRAPHS **RACHEL WARNE**

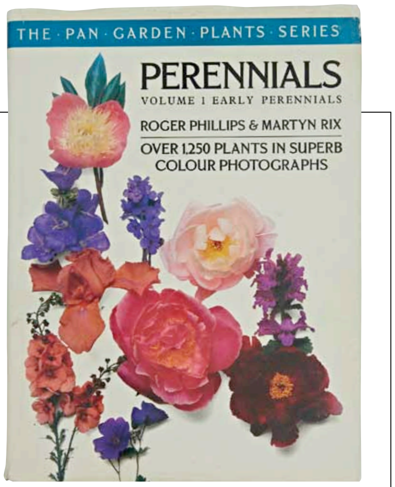
In considering this list of books that have meant so much to me during my 60 years of gardening, I feel concerned for those people I meet who despair of ever remembering the Latin names. The best part of reading a gardening book is recognising the plants as familiar friends. Gradually you discover they are grouped in families, with recognisable characteristics. It is only by intimate contact with plants, by caring for their needs, that we retain their names by recognising them as individuals. Plant it, tend it, watch over it, and its name will stick.

BEST FOR IDENTIFICATION

***The Pan Garden Plants Series: Perennials* by Roger Phillips and Martyn Rix**

For beginners in particular to gardening, and the rest of us who rely on help with plant identification and inspiration, I cannot recommend this highly enough. I constantly refer to them and find myself carried away by beautifully detailed portraits as clear and vivid as if I held a specimen in my hand, while especially thrilling are mature specimens photographed in their natural environment, in countries all around the temperate world, many of which have been introduced over centuries into our gardens. Equally valuable are the detailed descriptions by Martyn Rix, giving both the Latin names and English names where available. There follows a concise description of the plants, where they originated and the conditions they require. And much more, especially for cultivars and hybrids.

Beth Chatto is one of our foremost gardeners and her garden in Essex is a must-visit for all those intent on improving their plantsmanship.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PERENNIALS
VOLUME 1 EARLY PERENNIALS
ROGER PHILLIPS & MARTYN RIX
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BEST FOR NEW DISCOVERIES

***The Explorer's Garden: Rare and Unusual Perennials* by Daniel J Hinkley**

A good garden book is so much more than an encouragement to make a garden. I have been transported around the temperate world by the writing of Dan Hinkley, who I first met through his minutely observed descriptions of plants in the catalogue for his renowned nursery Heronswood. Since then I have met him, heard him lecture and seen his remarkable films of his travels, especially in the Far East. In Japan he was overwhelmed with surprise and pleasure by the extraordinary plants he found, unknown to gardeners at that time. His ability to convey his excitement and joy at the discovery of such plants with the possibility of introducing some of them into temperate gardens around the world is vividly expressed in his book. Beautiful photographs by Lynne Harrison complement the writing.

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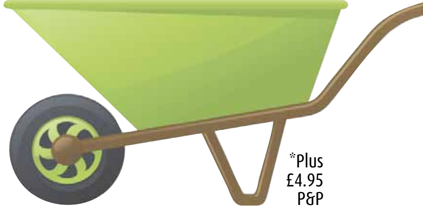

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Books special

BEST FOR SOIL HEALTH

***Compost* by Clare Foster**

Controversy continues to rage over the benefits of organic gardening to our health, but there is no doubt that improving and maintaining the health of our soil is essential to life. Soil and water are our most precious elements. Clare Foster's little book is absorbing and easy to read as a novel. After reading it you will never be content with tossing garden and kitchen waste into a corner and leaving it to break down, ignored and unattended. As Clare says, 'Making compost is like cooking, you need the right ingredients in the right proportion to make a balance, which will contain a wide variety of nutrients available to the plants, as well as improving the texture of the soil'. Together with the benefits that well-made compost provides, the practice of compost-making becomes as fascinating as the practice of gardening itself. How many of us know or understand the nature of soil or are aware of the infinite processes that go on beneath our feet, another universe that supports all life? To plunge my hands into wholesome compost and give a huge sniff is as satisfying as turning out a well-baked loaf.

COMPOST
CLARE FOSTER

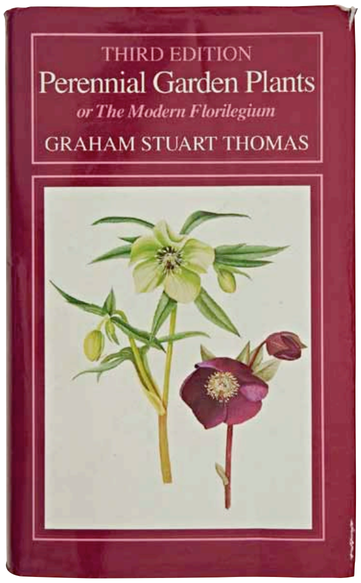
> *"There is scarcely a problem that will not be dealt with, plus many more you had not imagined"*
>
> *The Well-Tended Perennial Garden* by Tracy DiSabato-Aust

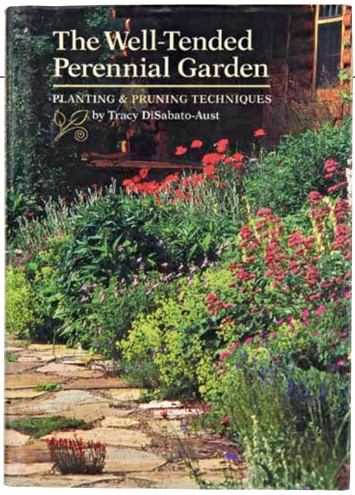
BEST FOR GARDENING CRAFT

***Perennial Garden Plants* by Graham Stuart Thomas**

Of all the books on gardening that fill my shelves to overflowing, the writer I turn to most frequently is Graham Stuart Thomas. His book **Perennial Garden Plants** was first published in 1976 and has been revised and republished several times. It remains to this day my most-valued book on the art and craft of gardening. Together with a lifetime of hands-on experience and ever-widening research he remains for me the most scholarly yet accessible garden writer. His plant descriptions, are totally absorbing. I need another lifetime to re-read and absorb what I have missed or forgotten.

Seasoned here and there with dry wit, Graham's writing expresses his love of plants together with his photography, and even more so through his exquisite line drawings and watercolours. A further dozen or so titles wait to be explored.




The Well-Tended Perennial Garden
PLANTING & PRUNING TECHNIQUES
by Tracy DiSabato-Aust

BEST FOR PRACTICAL ADVICE

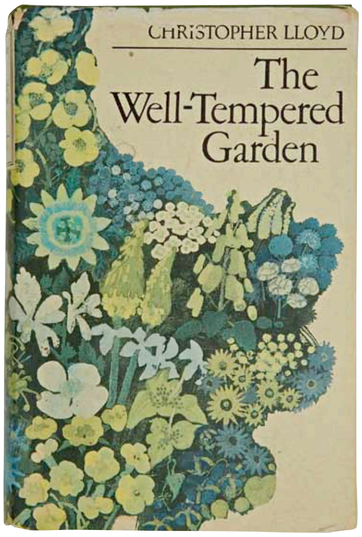
***The Well-Tended Perennial Garden* by Tracy DiSabato-Aust**

We all need to enlarge our knowledge through the experiences of good garden writers, especially someone like Tracy DiSabato-Aust, whose writing from hands-on experience will stimulate the most jaded appetite. This young American garden designer writes with the authority and enthusiasm born of everyday involvement with the making and maintenance of gardens, whether small or large, public or private. She is an internationally known designer, writer, photographer and consultant.

In this astonishingly informative book there is scarcely a problem you may have had that will not be dealt with, plus many more you had not imagined. The age-old problem of pruning perennials, when, if, or how to – is dealt with extensively.

It is a breath of fresh air among today's plethora of gardening books. It is so full of original ideas combined with earthy, hands-on experience. I could not put it down, but spent two days making notes to pin up on the potting-shed wall – and that after 60 years of gardening.

Books special


CHRISTOPHER LLOYD
The Well-Tempered Garden

Design, maintenance and plant combinations are all dealt with in detail. But it is the pruning, pinching-out and dead-heading of so many things I had not considered before, in order to grow plants with the minimum of staking, and to prolong the flowering season, often for weeks. Photographs and drawings illustrate brilliantly her theories, encouraging the most timid gardener to plunge in with shears or even strimmer.

Christopher Lloyd
The Well-Tempered Garden
COLLINS
COMPOST
CLARE FOSTER
The Explorer's Garden
Rare and Unusual Perennials
TIMBER PRESS
Perennials
VOLUME 1 EARLY PERENNIALS
Roger Phillips & Martyn Rix
Perennials
VOLUME 2 LATE PERENNIALS
Roger Phillips & Martyn Rix

> *"On first reading I was amused, informed, tipped head over heels by controversial ideas"*
>
> *The Well-Tempered Garden* by Christopher Lloyd

Read every word. Tracy's voice speaks to you – she will help you like no other, and add immeasurably to the pleasure you will gain from growing plants to perfection.

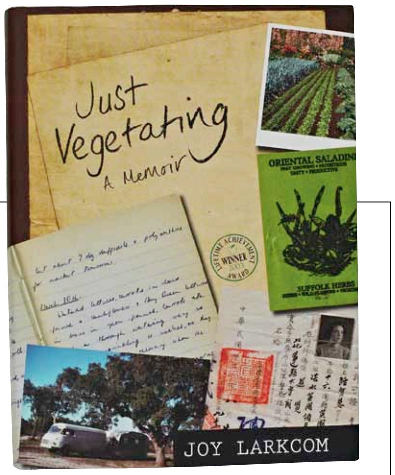
BEST FOR IDEAS

The Well-Tempered Garden

by Christopher Lloyd

Not being a subscriber to *Country Life*, I was unaware of the great man, Christopher Lloyd until this arrived on my desk. First printed in 1970, it has not been outshone. It is packed with ideas you would never have thought of: observations you wish you had discovered yourself. On first reading I was amused, informed, tipped head over heels by controversial ideas, led on by an opinionated style of writing which, far from being off-putting, became addictive. But there were differences of opinion I could not overlook. Christo could not stand bergenias. (I later learnt that he tended to dislike anything that would not thrive for him.) In contrast I cannot garden without them! So I wrote to this provocative stranger a letter, of appreciation and reproof! Back came a postcard, 'Come to lunch'. This was the beginning of a long friendship that lasted until January 2006, when he died, aged 84.

In the latter years of his life, he took, I think, a mischievous pleasure in shocking people with some of his unexpected (outrageous!) colour combinations, but with Christopher I was always alerted to see through fresh eyes, and not be prejudiced by outworn ideas. Both our gardens in their different ways offer the art of gardening as a deep-rooted way of life, rather than ephemeral excitement.


Just Vegetating
A Memoir
JOY LARKCOM

BEST COLLECTED WORK

Just Vegetating: A Memoir

by Joy Larkcom

Throughout the past 40 years Joy has been writing eye-opening articles and books on the vast range of eatables from the garden, of which we were not aware, or which had been lost or forgotten.

Joy's books and articles introduce a wealth of simple luxuries to our diet. In *Just Vegetating: A Memoir*, Joy's latest and most heartwarming book, she has collected together articles she wrote many years ago and threaded them together with the story of how she, her husband Don, and two young children travelled Europe for a year in a second-hand caravan. Five star conditions they were not, but money could not buy the life-enhancing adventures they had in their aim to discover what other nationalities put on their plates, and how. It's illustrated with torn-out jottings from notebooks and black and white photographs.

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Books special

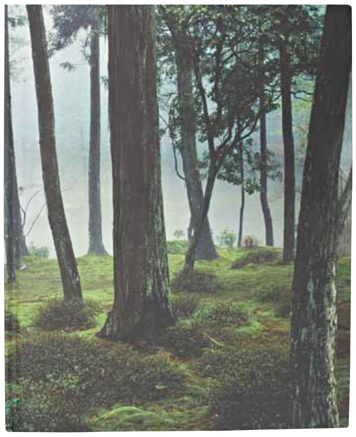
It is a privilege to be taken into the heart of this family and share the wealth of experiences they found. As Joy writes, 'Our memories are rich with the beautiful places we stayed in, famous and unknown, which we never would have visited in a lifetime of holidays'.

BEST FOR INSPIRATION

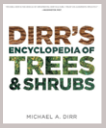
Spirit: Garden Inspiration
by Dan Pearson

It takes a rare mind and eye to break away from our traditional view of what makes a garden, but through his many and varied experiences worldwide, Dan's mind has been clearly focused on the relationship between man and his environment.

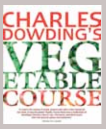
Today the majority of people live in urbanised communities so far removed from the natural world that even the possibility of rainfall, this basic need of life, is usually referred to by the weatherman as a threat. Dan has drawn inspiration from observing natural plant communities growing in widely varying conditions, and shows how we can learn from them, to find plants adapted to seemingly impossible situations. He shows how man's hunger for spiritual comfort and peace is found in nurturing plants even on a balcony, houseboat, or by curtaining bare walls with living greenery.



GARDENS ILLUSTRATED*'s 10 favourite books of 2012*



DIRR'S ENCYCLOPEDIA OF TREES AND SHRUBS
by Michael A Dirr
'One of the best plant selection guides.' *Review Tony Kirkham*
Timber Press, £50 – offer price £45
ISBN 978-0881929010



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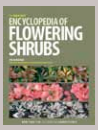

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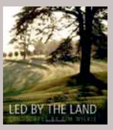

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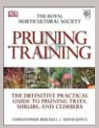

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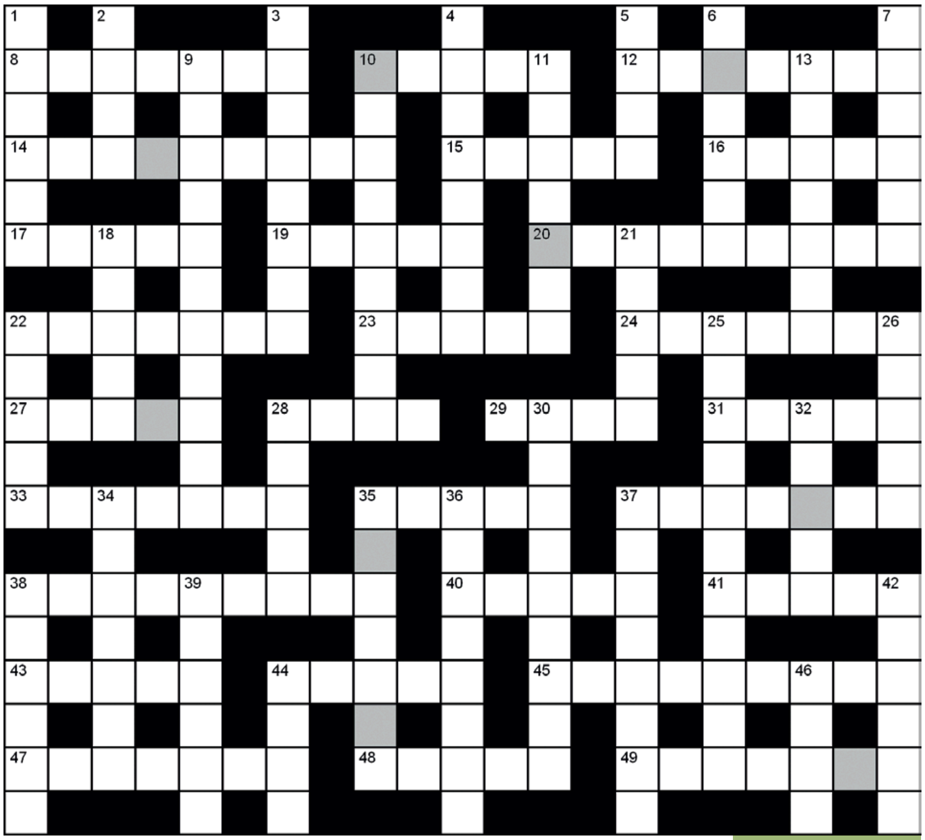
Christmas crossword



You could win a magnum of champagne if you solve our festive puzzle for gardeners

ACROSS

8 Plant's natural environment – in the High Street? (7)

10 Woolly growth on leaves, etc – useful for making jelly! (5)

12 Hybrid, fragrant, flowering shrub … left out of oleaster arrangement (3,4)

14 *Oleaster* genus – gets Angela and Sue confused (9)

15 Cork oak tree *Quercus* __, dahlia root, say, with top changed (5)

16 Briefly, county location of Waddesdon Plant Centre (5)

17/9 The 'Cut-leaf crab-apple' – or Australian Mist, perhaps (5,11)

19 A garden avenue/path – in pastoral Leeds (5)

20 All sorts of this flavouring from *Glycyrrhiza yunnanensis*? (9)

22 As Pulmonaria leaves are espied? (7)

23 Red and white symbol of royal house, __ rose (5)

24 Open to the elements (7)

27 An organic, overwintering onion in Connemara, darling? (5)

28 Plant designer Kingsbury's first Christmas! (4)

29 Famous gardener's first name in botanical analysis (4)

31 Use a spade to eg add compost to soil (3,2)

33 Floral wreath left in a grand design (7)

35 F1 hybrid series of impatiens from Africa (jungle) (5)

37 Jerusalem sage genus with spectacular seedheads (7)

38 Dan Pearson's choice of this plant is latifolia – really hip, exotic (9)

40 Consumer of plant produce only (5)

41 Fork's tine – terrible smell right inside! (5)

43 A hard wood – partly fir, OK, once? (5)

44 Like the autumn leaves – and glassware? (5)

45 The dead-nettle is a heavenly being! (9)

47 Wild majoram's unusual orange, love (7)

48 Pinches off stem's tip to prevent further growth (5)

49 Crazy, obsessive type's almond container? (3,4)

DOWN

1 Genus of grasses he confused with plum (6)

2 Scandinavian pop group's double-flowering narcissus (4)

3 Sort of upright shrub that's the norm? (8)

4 Gertrude Jekyll's house meant us moving by start of December (8)

5 Part of Wakehurst arboretum trailed by wise men? (4)

6 Giant grass with hollow, woody stem (6)

7 Name of Scottish monster, summer-heading cauliflower! (6)

9 See 17ac.

10 Parasitic plant – might cost you a smacker or two at Christmas! (9)

11 It makes holes in the soil for seedlings (7)

13 eg lady's slippers – alternatively children, it's said (7)

18 Christopher, Great Dixter's iconic gardener (5)

21 See 42dn.

22 Shoot – a bit of holly? (5)

25 Alternative name for the kalanchoe – and Apple Ltd, oddly (6,5)

26 Marram grass typically grows on these (5)

28 In garden a dirty, lowest point (5)

30 Desire to be police informer – a sign your lawn needs attention? (4,5)

32 Okra is equivalent to 5/8ths of wellingtons! (5)

34 Underground stem of eg an iris (7)

35 A variety of auricula's soft goat-leather (7)

36 Dan Pearson's choice ilex, non-prickly with abundant red berries (1,1,3,3)

37 Fruit of a certain evergreen – nice open arrangement (4,4)

38 Not the sort of ivy you'd use in a wreath! (6)

39 Tropical plant of gourd family – used in Bath? (6)

42/21 A margined holly that's male, despite its name (6,5)

44 Award-winning garden designer Jinny, takes nothing from flower (4)

46 The European wild cherry… in hedge, a nuisance (4)

SOLUTIONS WILL BE PRINTED IN THE FEBRUARY ISSUE

NOVEMBER'S SOLUTIONS

ACROSS

1 Fragrant **6** Japan **9** Bract **10** Contrast **12** Mossy **13** Soft **15** Cornus **17** Buckland **19** Nectary **21** Leaves **23** Beta **24** Sarah **26** Edam **28** White tip **30/11** Courtyard **31** Wilts **32** Ramblers.

DOWN

2 Rubia **3** Gladdon **4** Artemisia **5** Ticks **6** Jenny **7** Parasol **8** NGS **14** Fence **16** Ounce **17** Bay **18** Colchicum **20** Coastal **22** Asexual **24** Setts **25** Riper **27** Aster **29** Haw.

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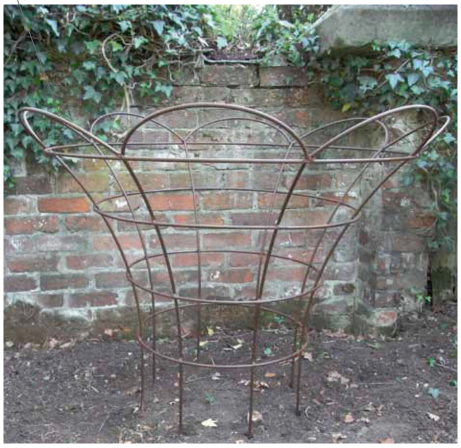

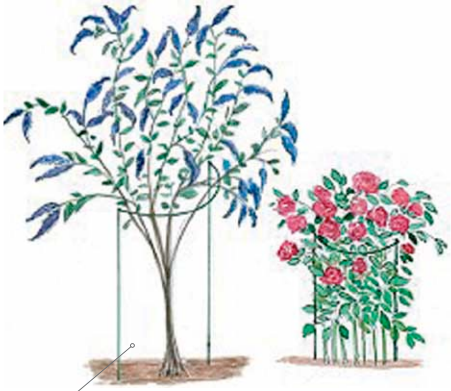

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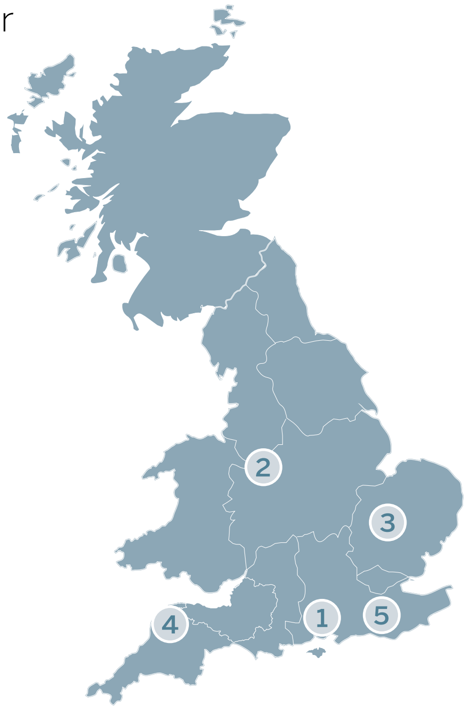

1. SIR HAROLD HILLIER GARDENS

Enjoy carpets of snowdrops and explore the stunning Winter Gardens, one of the biggest in Europe. With plant chosen specifically for their scent, colours and structure, which are at their best from November to March. Don't miss the National Collection of *Hamamelis*, outstanding during January and February. Excellent restaurant and Tea Rooms.

ADDRESS **Jermyns Lane, Romsey, Hampshire SO51 0QA**
WEBSITE **www.hilliergardens.org.uk** TEL **01794 369317/318**

2. TRENTHAM GARDENS

Credit: Joanne Fawcett

Vast perennial plantings by renowned designers offer up a sparkly architectural display of frosty elegance, with structural planting left standing until January. Enjoy a bracing lakeside walk and Capability Brown parkland then warm up in the tearoom with its stunning panoramic views of the lake. Adjacent is an impressive shopping village.

ADDRESS **Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST4 8JG**
WEBSITE **www.trentham.co.uk** TEL **01782 646646**

3. ANGLESEY ABBEY

With 114 acres to explore, there's inspiration and delight all year at Anglesey Abbey. The Winter Walk comes alive with its fascinating barks, colourful foliage and delicious scents, and a spectacular 200 varieties of snowdrop, which begin to show in January. Gardens open daily 10.30am – 4.30pm, except 24-26 December.

ADDRESS **Quy Road, Lode, Cambridge CB25 9EJ**
WEBSITE **www.nationaltrust.org.uk/angleseyabbey**
TEL **01223 810080**

4. RHS GARDEN ROSEMOOR

Whatever the weather, you're guaranteed a great day out at RHS Garden Rosemoor this winter. Rosemoor's Winter Sculpture Exhibition runs throughout December and continues into the new year with an exciting mix of thought-provoking work from a diverse collection of British sculptors. Exhibition begins 24 November..

ADDRESS **Great Torrington, Devon EX38 8PH**
WEBSITE **www.rhs.org.uk/gardens/rosemoor**
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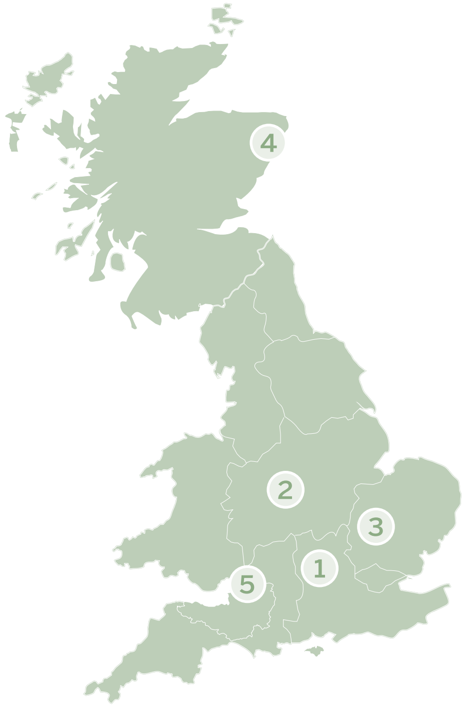
5. SHEFFIELD PARK & GARDEN

This magnificent informal landscape garden at Sheffield was laid out in the 18th century by 'Capability' Brown and further developed in the early years of the 20th century by its owner, Arther G Soames. Winter is a spectacular time to enjoy the gardens and experience the stunning sights we have to offer.

ADDRESS **Sheffield Park, East Sussex TN22 3QX**
WEBSITE **www.nationaltrust.org.uk/sheffield-park-and-garden/**
TEL **01825 790231**

Botanic Garden Guide...

Winter is the perfect time to visit a botanic garden. As the temperature drops be sure to warm up and explore the magic of a botanic glasshouse.



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ADDRESS **Rose Lane, Oxford OX1 4AZ**
WEBSITE **www.botanic-garden.ox.ac.uk** TEL **01865 286690**

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WEBSITE **www.birminghambotanicalgardens.org.uk**
TEL **0121 454 1860**

3. CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY BOTANIC GARDENS

This exceptional Botanic Garden showcases over 8,000 plant species from around the globe, nine National Plant Collections and the best arboretum in the region. Highlights include the Winter Garden, glasshouses of cacti and tropical rainforests, and the unique systematic beds. Garden Café and Shop, open daily from 10am.

ADDRESS **1 Brookside, Cambridge CB2 1JE**
WEBSITE **www.botanic.cam.ac.uk** TEL **01223 336265**

4. CRUICKSHANK BOTANIC GARDEN, UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

Credit: George McKay

As the most northern Botanic Garden in the UK, the 4.5 hectare property has over 2,500 taxa grown in picturesque settings, including an Arboretum and lawn and ponds, along with a stunning Herbaceous Border, Sunken Garden and Rose Garden. CBG is a venue for formal research, learning and public enjoyment.

ADDRESS **The Chanonry, Aberdeen, AB24 3UU**
WEBSITE **www.abdn.ac.uk/botanic-garden** TEL **01224 273638**

5. THE UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL BOTANIC GARDEN

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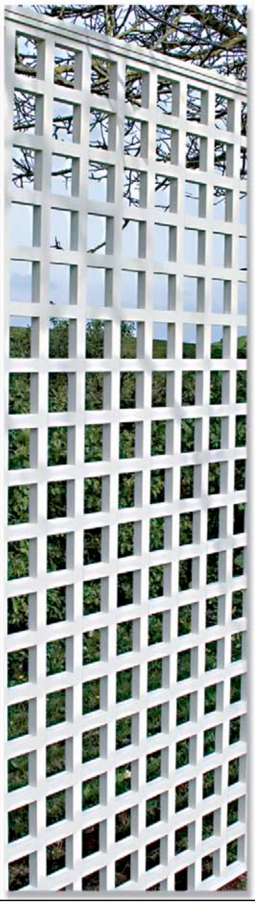

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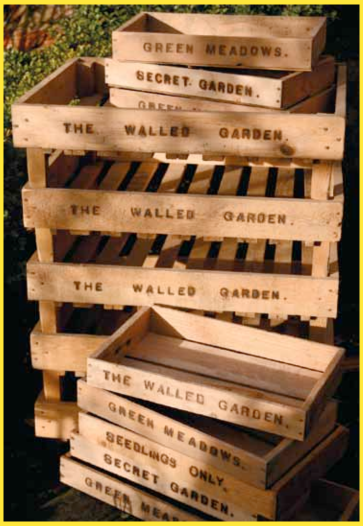

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MARIANNE MAJERUS

The great bee rescue

Could taking a chainsaw to the problem offer the best chance to some resident bees?

WORDS **FRANK RONAN** ILLUSTRATION **ANGELA HARDING**

Frank Ronan is a novelist who lives and gardens in Worcestershire

There were wild bees on the common by the back gate, living in the trunk of a decrepit mazzard. They were sweet-tempered and I would stop by to see how they did every morning as I took the dog that way. They got the bee disease when it was rampant, but worked through it and recovered. The first time I saw them swarm I sent for my bee-keeping friend Den and he put the multitude in a box to take home and tame them. They wouldn't put up with a man-made hive and flew off from him. I like to think they found another gean on another common. The remnant thrived and whenever they swarmed again I let them shift for themselves. Now and then the tree would sag and lean a little further and the crack that was their entrance lengthen and for a few days there would be methodical frenzy as they adapted their living quarters to the fluctuating architecture.

Eventually, as a tree that is seven-eighths dead must, the mazzard fell, presenting several problems. The worst was whether the bees would cope with accommodation at 90 sudden degrees, or look elsewhere and leave us without their steady companionship. More practically the fallen cherry was blocking the way. I cut a tunnel through the branches on the path and resigned myself to having to borrow a chainsaw, wondering how bees, even as well-behaved as these, would react to such an aggressively buzzing machine.

I've never liked using chainsaws. Apart from the awful noise and the petrol stench, they are cumbersome and unpredictable in ways that are disconcerting for a machine with such sharp teeth which, as often as not, you are obliged to wield in awkward and unstable situations. You know where you are with a bow-saw and can clamber about happily in the crown of a large tree with one slung over your shoulder and confidently dangle upside-down to reach and saw one-handed the branch you are after.

But 40 feet of hard cherry to be made into firewood is a job for a chainsaw, and a job I couldn't delegate if the bee portion of the trunk was to be respected. Den came and looked and said that the bees had left. The few we could see going in and out were only scavenging the remains of the honey. I couldn't help hoping that he was wrong; that there was a tenacious queen in there with just enough loyal followers to remake their home sideways. Den also offered the loan of his new electric chainsaw.

Angela Harding

"The few we could see going in and out were only scavenging the remains of the honey"

I was sceptical enough at the idea of a chainsaw being electric, but when I picked the thing up I nearly laughed. It was like a child's toy, weighing next to nothing, with a flimsy tiny blade. It hardly seemed worth the effort of unrolling the extension cord, but I thought it might do to trim some of the little branches off so I pressed the button.

Three hours later a fair portion of the tree lay about my feet in pieces. Great sections of trunk dissected by a blade that barely covered the radius. I had climbed with it and dangled with it and flourished it one-handed. I went out and bought one of my own the next day, slightly bigger and heavier than Den's, but still just as much fun to use. The mathematics of cutting a tree are exhilarating: judging how branches will twist and fall and how to avoid the deadly trajectories. Now the old sport was given the edge of a new toy. If you have a gap on your Christmas list I recommend an electric chainsaw to plug it.

Meanwhile, in all this dendro-butchery, were the bees forgotten? At first it seemed that Den was right, and the comings and goings slowed to a trickle. But then on a sunny calm day in late September it suddenly seemed as if they were there again, home making, gathering in, not scavenging. The spring will tell. □

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